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Parliamentary Debates

VOL. XXXIII

Parliamentary Debates

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THE

Parliamentary Debates

FROM

THE YEAR

1803

TO THE PRESENT TIME:

FORMING A CONTINUATION OF THE WORK ENTITLED
"THE PARLIAMENTARY HISTORY OF ENGLAND FROM THE EARLIEST
PERIOD TO THE YEAR 1803."

PUBLISHED UNDER THE SUPERINTENDENCE OF

T. C. HANSARD.

VOL. XXXIII.

COMPRISING THE PERIOD
FROM
THE SEVENTH DAY OF MARCH,
TO
THE TWENTY-FIFTH DAY OF APRIL,
1816.

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1816.

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ERRATUM.

ERRATUM.

In page 231 of the present Volume, what fell from Mr. Macdonald is erroneously attributed to Lord Ebrington. After Admiral Markham sat down,

Mr. *Macdonald* said, he could not suffer the question of the Irish chancellor of the exchequer to pass without giving the House an opportunity of judging of its fairness and liberality: he had been pleased to ask, whether an increase to his own salary of 2,000*l.* per annum, by a first lord of the admiralty, was not *primâ facie* more objectionable than the present measure? Now, he advised the right hon. gentleman (if indeed every job of the present day was to be set off against some preceding job of a former day, a species of defence most unsatisfactory to the country) to be at least a little better founded in his facts. The case to which the right hon. gentleman alluded, but of which he seemed to know very little, was simply this:—about the time of the late lord Melville's appointment to the office of first lord of the admiralty, this House and the public were surprised to learn that a grant had been made to him for his life of 2,000*l.* a year in the shape of addition to his emoluments in his sinecure office of lord privy seal of Scotland. It was defended on the ground that it was a compensation for the very deficient salary of his effective office, that salary being at the time only 3,000*l.* per annum; but the augmentation was an appendage to a sinecure for life, while the situation of first lord of the admiralty was held only during pleasure; it was therefore universally condemned as a monstrous proceeding. But it did appear, that the salary of 3,000*l.* per annum was much too low for that most important and most laborious office, and it seemed to be the general understanding, that it should in future be augmented; not however by resorting to such scandalous and indecorous expedients, but by an additional salary. Accordingly, when lord Barham, who succeeded lord Melville, presided at the board, a minute was framed recommending the increase to which the right hon. gentleman had adverted, to all who should hereafter be appointed to that situation. His successor happened to be my lord Howick. Such were the facts of this case which the right hon. gentleman had thought fit to represent as an instance of a first lord of the admiralty adding 2,000*l.* to his own salary, and which he had thought it discreet to put into comparison with the late indefensible job.

After Mr. Fitzgerald's explanation,

Mr. *Macdonald* said, that as to lord Grey's having given his sanction to the measure of his predecessor, it was an arrangement made in conformity with the general understanding in that House, and if he had withheld it, he would have done an injury to the public service; but what analogy could this possibly have to the case under consideration, which every man, both in and out of the House, must be equally unanimous in condemning?

THE PARLIA-

THE
Parliamentary Debates

During the Fourth Session of the Fifth Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, appointed to meet at Westminster, the First Day of February 1816, in the Fifty-sixth Year of the Reign of His Majesty King GEORGE the Third. [*Sess.* 1816.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Thursday, March 7, 1816.

PROPERTY TAX.] The Duke of *Sussex* presented a petition from Suffolk, complaining of the distressed state of the agricultural interest, and praying relief. His royal highness then presented a petition from the ward of Cripplegate Within against the property or income tax, which it described as odious, oppressive, and inquisitorial, and expressed the astonishment and regret of the petitioners that ministers should intend to continue this tax in time of peace, in the face of the solemn pledge given to the country, that it was to continue only during the war, and no longer, especially as one of the ministers themselves had declared it to be a tax inapplicable to a time of peace.

Lord *Holland* presented a petition from the inhabitants of Plymouth, against the renewal of the property tax in time of peace, and his lordship observed, he was pleased to see that the petitioners joined with it a prayer against the enormous military establishment with which it was now proposed to burthen the country. The petition being read, his lordship stated, that respectably and numerously as the petition was signed, it would have been much more numerously signed had it not been for an unfounded idea that they would be too late in their petition.

The Duke of *Bedford* presented a petition from the land-owners, occupiers of the isle of Ely, complaining of great agricultural distress, extreme pressure of taxation, and praying the property tax might not be renewed. His grace read a paper, stating the great increase of executions for debt, and distresses for rents in the last year in one hundred of the isle, and the number of farmers who had become bankrupt, in order to show that the allegations of the petition were strictly founded in fact.

The Earl of *Egremont* presented a petition from the land-owners, occupiers, &c. at and in the neighbourhood of Lewes, against the renewal of the property tax, and complaining of great agricultural distress. His lordship stated, that the petitioners had been returned as defaulters into the exchequer for the non-payment of half a year's property tax, although they obtained no profit from their farms, and were wholly unable to pay the tax. The petition was read, stating the inability of the petitioners to pay any taxes or rates, from the great distress of their situation.

Earl *Fortescue* presented a petition from the land-owners, occupiers, &c. at and in the neighbourhood of South Molton, Devonshire, against the renewal of the property tax, and complaining of great agricultural distress. His lordship stated, that amongst those who had signed the petition were several commissioners of the property tax, that four hundred persons in that quarter had been returned as defaulters into the exchequer, who were wholly unable to pay the tax, and that if it was to be again imposed, he knew not how it could be paid.

Lord *Rolle* agreed, that great agricultural distress existed in the quarter from whence the petition came, and was ready to go along with his noble friend in supporting any practicable measure, for the relief of the agricultural classes. He thought much would be done in this respect by the modifications, which it had been intimated it was intended to propose, but if his noble friend would go still further, and propose a property tax of 10 per cent. upon all incomes above a certain amount, he would second him, in order to relieve in a still greater degree the lower classes of the community. There was another object of taxation, respecting which he thought greater relief ought to be afforded; he alluded to agricultural horses, the tax upon which, in many instances, pressed heavily upon the lower class of farmers, and he thought it would be advisable to place this tax upon a scale similar to the property tax, in order that it might press more lightly upon that description of persons. It ought to be remembered that the tax had been in 1806, under another administration, raised from 6¼ to 10 per cent.

The Marquis of *Lansdowne* was anxious to take the earliest opportunity of making some observations to their lordships on the subject of the petitions which had been just presented, and to express his decided conviction, on every principle, and under every view in which the subject presented itself to his mind, that this was not a tax which ought to be continued in time of peace, particularly in the present situation of the country, both as to its domestic circumstances, and its relations with Europe in general. But, notwithstanding his firm conviction on that head, he would not perhaps have risen at so early a period to state this his conviction, had he not thought himself called upon by rumours out of doors of certain statements having been made in another place. These rumours had for this day or two been in circulation, and called upon him to state distinctly his opinion with respect to the tax in question. It had been truly stated by the noble lord who just sat down, that this tax had in 1806 been raised by an administration, with which he was connected, to 10 per cent.; and he was desirous, therefore, to trouble their lordships with a few words on that point. It was not necessary for him to inform their lordships, or any one acquainted with the financial history of this country, that the tax had been imposed at 5 per cent. by the administration which preceded the last administration of Mr. Pitt. It was afterwards, under Mr. Pitt's administration, raised to 6¼ per cent., and subsequently to 10 per cent. by that administration of which he formed an unworthy part. He wished to state, that under the circumstances of the times, he had thought himself justified in submitting to parliament this augmentation of the tax, and he considered himself as having then proposed only what the necessity of the occasion demanded. At that period, the loan, which in the previous years was 10 millions, had the year before been raised to 20 millions; and, under the pressure of a formidable war, and the financial difficulties of the country, he then believed, and he believed now, that no other resource could well be found to answer the occasion. He was, therefore, perfectly ready to take his share of any odium, of any unpopularity, of any responsibility, that might attach to the measure, which, under the circumstances in which the country then stood, had been, in his opinion, properly adopted. Then, with respect to another measure which had been recommended by the administration of that period, and with respect to which certain rumours had now gone abroad, he was anxious to make some observations, and state some facts to their lordships. He knew it had been stated—and a most extraordinary statement it was—that by a plan of finance which he had the honour, in the discharge of his duty, to submit to the consideration of the other House of Parliament in the year 1807—of which plan, though the responsibility belonged to him, it was unnecessary to state that the merit belonged to his noble friend (lord Grenville) near him—but he had heard, with an astonishment which he could not well describe, that it had been stated, that by this plan it must have been the intention of his noble friend and himself to continue the property tax in time of peace. [Hear, hear! from lord Grenville and others.] He now took the earliest opportunity, in the presence of his noble friend, and others acquainted with the nature of that plan, and the views with which it was brought forward, to affirm directly the reverse. [Hear, hear!] Fortunately, however, the matter did not rest on the mere affirmation of himself, or of his noble friend near him, but also on written proof applicable to that question. The points which would arise here were, 1st. As to the intention of himself and his noble friend. 2d. As to the plan itself, as printed. 3d. As to the resolutions of the House of Commons upon it. 4th. What was the purport of the bill founded on those resolutions. 5th.

The testimony of those who supported the plan. 6th. The testimony of those who opposed it. Not only from no part of these testimonies could be deduced the slightest ground for the charge that it was the intention or wish of his noble friend or himself to continue the income tax in a period of peace, but the whole of the facts proved directly the reverse. What were the intentions of his noble friend and himself, namely, that the income tax should be considered as a war tax only, and should not encroach on a period of peace, he had already declared. These intentions were perfectly well known to a gentleman then officially connected with them, and of all the individuals that could be named, Mr. Vansittart was that individual whom he should least have suspected of giving the slightest countenance to a charge, that they had any view or intention of continuing the tax in a time of peace. He should have thought that that right hon. gentleman, of all men, knowing what the intentions of the ministers of that day were, would have sought an opportunity, if he heard such a charge made, of giving it that contradiction which he knew it deserved. He did not wish to trouble their lordships by going into long details, he would only just refer to the financial plan of his noble friend and himself: but that reference would be amply sufficient at once to negative all idea that it was intended by them to continue the income tax in a time of peace, and would, on the contrary, prove directly the reverse. The noble marquis here read the concluding passage of the plan, stating that every person who impartially examined it, would see the nature of the relief which was intended, and to which the public would naturally look at the conclusion of of peace, namely, the repeal of the property tax. Here, his lordship observed, was direct and positive evidence of the intentions of the framers of that plan, with regard to the repeal of the income tax at the period of peace, which completely negatived the charge brought against them. In the resolutions also which he proposed to the House of Commons (and which his lordship referred to), the property tax was specially excepted, it being distinctly and specifically stated, that the duties of customs and excise only were to be pledged for the payment of the interest of the loans. This was likewise direct and positive evidence that it was not their intention to pledge the property tax, or to continue it during peace. In the bill also that was brought in, founded upon these resolutions, the duties only of customs and excise were pledged for the payment of the interest of loans, and so anxious was he that the property tax should not be pledged, and thereby be prevented from being repealed at the return of peace, that on its being suggested to him, not in the House but out of it, that the reference to war taxes might possibly be conceived to include the property tax, he immediately had words inserted to except the property tax from all possibility of being conceived to be included. Thus, therefore, there was the evidence of all the documents which had reference to this subject, that it never was the intention of his noble friend or himself that the property tax should be continued during a period of peace. He now came to the evidence of their supporters, and he happened to have to refer to a speech of Mr. Vansittart (secretary of the treasury at the time) three years afterwards, in June 1809, when he was an independent member of parliament, which that gentleman had himself printed, and in which he had distinctly pointed out as one of the main features of this financial plan, that the property tax was untouched by, and was open therefore to be repealed at the conclusion of peace, to which repeal the public would naturally look at such a period. Was it to be believed that Mr. Vansittart, at the end of three years, did not understand a plan, which nine years afterwards he understood better? Was it to be imagined that he was practising a deliberate delusion upon the country, and stating what he did not himself believe? Mr. Vansittart, with all his great financial knowledge, had declared at only the distance of three years from the period of bringing forward that plan, that "the property tax no one had proposed to continue in time of peace, even as an annual grant," and nothing he could now say could weigh against that deliberate opinion. But they had also the evidence of their opponents. It happened that he had the opinion of lord Castlereagh upon the subject at the time, expressed in counter-resolutions which his lordship then moved, and recorded on the journals of the House. In these resolutions lord Castlereagh, after going through the minutest calculations regarding the whole plan, expressly recorded his opinion, that it would be inexpedient to pledge the war duties of customs and excise, which might be mitigated at the period of peace, whilst the property tax to the amount of 11,000,000*l.* remained untouched. Here was the noble lord's direct and decisive opinion upon the plan as it affected the property tax; and was it to be contended that lord Castlereagh understood the plan better now at nine years distance, than he did at the time of moving his resolutions? The continental politics of the noble lord had scarcely improved his knowledge of finance, and it was fair to suppose that he brought his best understanding of the plan to bear upon it at the time of its discussion. The opposition of that day were accused of some pertinacity, but according to the opinions they broached now they were in office, they must have been unusually kind and civil to aid the then ministers in imposing a delusion upon the country.—He had thus briefly gone over all the documents connected with the subject, and he trusted he had proved satisfactorily, that it could not have been the intention of his noble friend or himself, and that those who opposed them and who were now in office, never did believe it to be their intention to pledge the property tax, so that it must be continued in a time of peace, or that they had any intention of so continuing it. On the contrary, it was distinctly proved that the property tax was especially excepted from the operation of that financial plan, and that the repeal of that tax was expressly contemplated on the return of peace. It would be for the public to judge of such an attempt to mislead them. It might be convenient for men in official situations to state one opinion at one time, and another at a subsequent period, as it suited the purposes of the moment; but it might be easily discovered what impression such conduct made. There must indeed be a great distress for argument to support this measure of imposing this tax in time of peace, when such a subterfuge as that he had exposed, was resorted to—nor could the resorting to such a subterfuge fail to have its due impression upon the public mind. He had forborne to trouble their lordships with all the details of the plan to which he had referred; but if the conclusions he had drawn from them were disputed, he was prepared to go over the plan in all its details, point by point, and to prove most satisfactorily that it never was in the contemplation of those who proposed it to continue the property tax in a period of peace; and he again most positively asserted that such never was their intention. He had proposed the continuance of the tax in 1807 as a war tax strictly, without the least idea of continuing it during peace; and he was now decidedly of opinion that there was nothing in the domestic situation of the country—nothing in the state of Europe—which called for its continuance, nor could he consent, even in the event of an insecure peace, that this tax should be continued. It was only called for by the pressing exigencies of war, and with the war it ought to terminate.—The noble marquis concluded by apologising for having taken up so much of the time of their lordships upon this subject; but he thought it of importance that such a misrepresentation should be met by a direct refutation. He did not mean to charge wilful mistatement on any one, but certainly the accusation brought forward, that it was intended by the administration of 1806 to continue the property tax, displayed a degree of forgetfulness, or ignorance of the subject, which, considering the quarter from whence it came, was most extraordinary. He trusted he had satisfactorily proved, that so far from such having been their intention, the fact was directly the reverse, as they had distinctly looked to the repeal of the tax at the conclusion of peace.

The Earl of *Liverpool* said, he could not allow the speech of the noble marquis to pass without a few observations, although this was not the proper time for discussing the propriety or expediency of continuing the property tax. Whenever that question should be fairly brought under the consideration of their lordships, he should be prepared to defend the course which his majesty's government had thought proper to adopt with respect to it. He did not complain of the delusions which had been resorted to on the present occasion—on which side he must leave the House and the public to determine—nor did he complain of the expression of any difference of opinion as to the expediency or inexpediency of continuing the tax; what he complained of was, the endeavour which had been made to persuade the public that the faith of ministers and parliament were so pledged to the repeal of the tax, as to preclude any discussion whatever with respect to it. Let the question of the continuance of the tax be decided on its own merits. What he denied was, that any administration had given any pledge that the property tax should in no case be continued in time of peace. That parliament never was so committed, that the country never conceived that parliament had been so committed, appeared from the whole nature of the transaction, from the year 1799, when Mr. Pitt first proposed the property tax, under the name of the income tax. It was then proposed as a war tax, leaving open the question of continuing it in time of peace, to be subsequently considered. It was well known that on Mr. Pitt's proposition, the property tax was afterwards mortgaged for the payment of 56 millions of the national debt. On the conclusion of peace the tax was so mortgaged for nine years, until his noble friend (lord Sidmouth) moved for its repeal, and for funding the 56 millions for which it was pledged; providing by other taxes for the payment of the interest of that sum. The whole of this transaction proved, that it never was in contemplation when the property tax was originally proposed, that it should in no case be continued in time of peace. On the renewal of hostilities, his noble friend near him, proposed a renewal of the same principle of taxation at the rate of 5 per cent. Undoubtedly, the provisions of the act stated, that the tax should cease at the close of the war. But there was nothing to warrant the supposition that if at the conclusion of the war, parliament should think the continuance of the tax the best mode of diminishing the burthens of the country, that question was not perfectly open for discussion. It was a question to be determined entirely by the circumstances of the case.—Before he referred to that point of the noble marquis's speech which had called him up, he would advert to what had taken place in the last session of parliament, with respect to the property tax, and to the present situation of the question. When on the commencement of hostilities in 1815, he had proposed to their lordships the renewal of the property tax, although that proposal was only for a year, he had said decidedly that parliament was not committed on the question of its termination at that time, whether the country might be in a state of war, or in a state of peace, and that that question was entirely open, to be decided by the circumstances of the case. He had a right, therefore, to complain of the argument, that there existed any engagement by which he was bound to abstain from proposing, or parliament were bound to abstain from adopting, the continuation of the tax, if it should be thought expedient so to continue it.—He now came to the point which had induced him to trouble their lordships. The noble marquis's explanation was to him wholly unsatisfactory. The noble marquis seemed to assume, that it had been somewhere stated, that it had been the intention and wish of the government of 1806, to continue the property tax after the close of the war. He admitted, that such a statement would have been unwarrantable. He readily admitted to the noble marquis, that in the financial plan of that government, their object was to avoid pledging the property tax; that their object was to pledge all the war taxes, but that tax. He was very ready to admit that, and farther. Had he himself been connected with that government, and had his opinion strongly inclined to continue the property tax, in the event of peace, still he should not have thought it expedient to pledge it for that purpose. Without any decision on the expediency, or inexpediency of continuing the tax in time of peace, he should have contended, that it was not wise or expedient, distinctly to pledge it for that purpose. The question was, not whether the noble lords opposite were sincerely anxious that the property tax should not be continued in time of peace, or whether they had been solicitous to frame their system in consonance to that anxiety; but whether the system did not, with their own knowledge, involve contingencies, the occurrence of which must occasion the continuation of the tax in time of peace. It was impossible to know what might have been the private intention of the noble lords. He could refer only to their public documents. The noble earl here read a paragraph from the plan, in which it was stated, that under certain circumstances, parliament would be enabled to repeal the property tax "within a very short time after the conclusion of peace." What was the inference from that passage? That under certain circumstances the property tax would be continued for a certain period in time of peace. The question whether or not, in the event of peace, its continuance would have been prevented by the substitution of other duties, was quite a different question. By the plan, contingencies were evidently foreseen, in the event of which the property tax, to a certain extent, would have been pledged to be continued for a short time in peace.

of the nation. Such a motion was sanctioned by precedent; for, by referring to their Journals it would be seen, that in the years 1795, 1778, 1777, 1770, 1763, 1753, and in many other instances, such motions had been submitted and adopted. The House of Commons had acted also on the same principles, for every marked circumstance in the history of the country had been followed by a similar motion. If, then, on other occasions, parliament thought it proper to adopt such a proposition, he felt justified in stating, that besides being consonant with the uniform practice of the House, the present important crisis particularly demanded their attention. We had just concluded a war of unexampled violence and extent, which, for upwards of twenty years, had disturbed the repose of Europe; and in which this country had expended her best blood, and squandered her treasures with a lavish profusion. It was time, therefore, for her to demand repose, and the bounden duty of parliament to ensure her a comparative tranquillity. But let the House look to the real state of the nation, and it would be seen how very far it was removed from so valued an enjoyment. In such an inquiry it would be necessary to consider; first, the immense extent of the proposed peace establishment; secondly, the supplies necessary for its support; thirdly, the extent of the internal distress; and lastly, the state of Ireland. The peace establishment was one which the country looked upon with astonishment and dismay, which was not only of greater magnitude than every former peace establishment, but even exceeded the war establishment during the American war, when we had to contend with our exasperated colonies, and to oppose the insidious policy of our European enemies. It also exceeded the establishment during the four first years of the war waged against republican France. To this then the House should particularly direct its attention, and before it would lend its sanction to such an enormous establishment, compare it with those of different former periods, contrasting also the circumstances in their external policy, which distinguished them from the present. For instance, let the apparently secure peace we now enjoyed be compared with that of Amiens, when France, glowing in revolutionary frenzy, convulsed Europe, or was extending her arms around it. At that period the powers of the continent were all making the most vigorous exertions, and the sound of arms rang through every part of it. Such a state might with much satisfaction be opposed to the present, when no enemies appeared to disturb our repose, and when he who lately wielded the sceptre of France was confined a prisoner in St. Helena. By the success of our troops, and the skill of our valued chief, who led them to victory, and by bringing the allies into the field, we were enabled to procure a favourable peace; yet after placing the Bourbons on the throne of France, and dictating the terms of the pacification, what was the country promised? Here he felt how necessary it was to enter into the details of the restoration of that family, but a severe indisposition prevented him. He must now touch upon a topic in which it was his misfortune to differ from his noble friend who sat below him (lord Grenville), and it was with the utmost regret and diffidence he differed from the opinions of a man whose judgment was so sound and enlightened and whose love of his country was so sincere; but he was sure that he should be forgiven by his noble friend for stating what his conscience dictated. He would say, then, that had he been in England last year, he should not have voted for the war, but for the amendment of the noble earl (Grey). It was true, indeed, that, by the great talents of the duke of Wellington, the battle had been gained; but what would have been the consequence if that battle had been lost?—and such an event was by no means an improbable one. Indeed, it was most improbable that the event should have been as it was. He was himself on the left bank of the Rhine at the time of the battle of Waterloo; and he had conversed with several foreign officers on the subject, and they were all, and especially the Prussians, decidedly of opinion, that the battle must have been lost but for the astonishing talents of the duke of Wellington. In saying this, however, he did not mean to detract from the praise really due to ministers for the promptitude and energy of their measures when once they had decided upon the war. The next event was the march of the allies to Paris and the placing the legitimate monarch, Louis 18th, on the throne. This measure he considered as exceedingly impolitic; the restoration or rejection of Louis should have been left to the French people; the coming in of that king at the heels of the English army, had, as had been stated in the letter of a noble friend (lord Kinnaird) to the noble earl opposite, excited much discontent and ill-will in France against the English. True it was, that Louis was what was denominated the legitimate sovereign; but that was not legitimacy which consisted merely in birth: that was true legitimacy which secured at once the attachment and the happiness of the governed. He came now to the home establishment—[Here the noble duke, who had paused several times in the course of the preceding remarks, sat down and apologized for so doing, by stating that he was extremely indisposed, and felt himself too ill to proceed.]

The Earl of *Liverpool* expressed his regret at his grace's indisposition, and suggested that the motion might be read, and the debate upon it adjourned to a future day.

The motion was accordingly read by the lord chancellor, and on the motion of earl Grey, the debate was adjourned to Tuesday next.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, March 7.

Pavement of the Metropolis.] Mr. *M. A. Taylor* in rising to move for a select committee on this subject, observed, that the reason why he preferred taking this step to moving for leave to bring in a bill, was, that an opportunity might be given to the House of knowing from positive evidence the real necessity which existed for the measure. In the last session of parliament he had brought in a bill for the same subject, which he now had in view, and it had advanced to a second reading. The parish of Mary-le-bone opposed itself particularly to that bill, and in consequence of representations from that and other parishes he had consented to withdraw it, in consideration of an agreement with those parishes that they, before the present session, would meet him with such a bill as should satisfy the wishes of all parties. Some of those parishes did, to a certain degree, fulfil their promise, but the parish of Mary-le-bone still opposed the measure which he wished to submit to the consideration of the House. Fortunately, all the parishes did not object to it, but agreed with him that such a bill as he proposed was necessary. If the House should consent to the committee it would be fully seen that some regulation with regard to the paving of the Metropolis was necessary. Some of the parishes were so poor, that they could not defray the expense attending the proper pavement of their streets; and others were so divided among themselves on almost every occasion, that they sat debating, like a petty House of Commons, and neglected their most important obligations. In the committee, if the House should agree to it, the clerks of the several parishes might be examined, and such information gained from them, as would tend to explain what were the situations in which the different parishes were placed, and what course would be the most proper to take. He had endeavoured to give as much of his time as possible to this measure, and he found that the several parishes, and individuals in the same parish, were greatly divided as to the best mode of paving the streets. In the many letters which he had received on the subject, and had he been minister of the country he could scarcely have received more written communications—various methods were proposed:—Some thought that iron would be the best for the streets, others conceived stone would answer better, and others again proposed something different from either. The committee would determine what would really be the best, for it was impossible that a definitive arrangement could be made among persons who were so much at variance with each other. One part of the object which he had in view was, that some public officer should be appointed to superintend the paving of the different streets, and his name placed up in different parts of the metropolis, that persons who had any complaints to make on the subject of bad pavement might know to whom to apply for redress. If some such measure as this were not adopted, the public would be still liable to those accidents which unfortunately so frequently occurred from the pavement being broken up in several parts. In addition to the many accidents which he had mentioned to the House last session as being caused by the bad state of the streets, he could now relate many others, and one in particular where a friend of his was near losing his life by the upsetting of a coach in which he rode, in consequence of a broken part of the pavement. From these circumstances he hoped the House would concur with him in seeing the necessity of some interference on the part of the legislature. Most of the members of the House, with whom he had conversed, agreed with him on the principle which he intended to submit; but their acquiescence would avail little, if they did not support it by their votes, on the present occasion. He then moved, "That a select committee be appointed to inquire into the present state of the pavement of the metropolis, and to report their observations thereon to the House."

Sir *John Simeon* did not rise to oppose the motion; but, as the hon. and learned gentleman had spoken of the parish of Mary-le-bone, he felt himself called on to say a few words. He was a member of the vestry which governed that parish,—and he could assert, that the gentlemen composing that vestry had employed themselves, in every possible way, for the benefit of the parish. He was perfectly sure that the parish had powers within itself to remedy the inconvenience alluded to, which rendered any new measure quite unnecessary, with respect to them. Whenever he saw that any repairs were wanting, he sent to the vestry clerk, and in a few days the matter of complaint was removed.

General *Thornton* stated that he had been for several years, a member of the vestry of St. George's parish. He could say, exactly as the hon. member did of the vestry of St. Mary-le-bone, that no persons were more desirous to do their duty than they were—still, however, the duty was not properly done. In fact, in some cases, however well-intentioned they were, they had not the power to carry their wishes into effect. Penalties ought to be inflicted where they did not now attach. If the surveyor neglected his duty, he was not liable to any penalty, though the persons under his control were. He thought the public were very much indebted to the hon. member for bringing this subject forward, and he trusted some means would be devised for carrying into effect the object of his motion.

Mr. *Hurst* defended the motives of the hon. member in bringing forward his motion, and said he would support it from a conviction of its necessity.

Mr. *Taylor*, in reference to what had fallen from the hon. baronet, observed, that, if he had animadverted a little more strongly on the conduct of the parish of St. Mary-le-bone, he would have done nothing more than his duty. When that parish took the lead to oppose the bill last session, they sent circular letters to all the parishes of the metropolis, requesting them to call meetings for the purpose of expressing their hostility to the measure—their view being to stifle all proceedings on the subject. Some of them followed this advice, and the beadles went round with a few of the leading men of different parishes, calling on the inhabitants to oppose a bill introduced by Michael Angelo Taylor. But, even in the parish of St. Mary-le-bone, this deputation, that went about canvassing the inhabitants, were told by many of them, that they were glad the subject was taken up, and they would assist Mr. Taylor, as far as they could. The vestry published, in the daily prints, a statement, in which they set forth, that, at one of the fullest vestries ever held, peers, and bishops, and all the grandees of the parish attending, it was resolved to oppose the bill. He was surprised at this, because some of the persons mentioned had pledged themselves to support the measure; but, on inquiry, he found, that very few of them had heard any of the resolutions read, and that this imposing body of signatures was occasioned by the election of a new inspector. The hon. and learned gentleman then adverted to the answer given by the vestry of St. Mary-le-bone to a letter written by him on the subject of improving the pavement, in November last; in which they stated their confident opinion, that some regulation might be adopted for improving the pavement of the metropolis; but the moment they perceived that a bill was drawn up, having compulsory clauses in it, and that it included their parish, they manfully refused to have any thing to do with it. The hon. and learned gentleman, in conclusion, expressed his determination to introduce the same clauses in the bill which he contemplated; because the parish of St. Mary-le-bone appeared to be badly paved.

The motion was then agreed to, and a committee immediately appointed.

Papers relating to Lord Cochrane.] Lord Cochrane rose to move for certain papers relating to the charges he had brought against lord Ellenborough. The noble lord then read the titles of the documents; two or three of which being connected with the Admiralty,

Mr. *Lushington* rose and requested the noble lord to postpone his motion, as there was no person then in the House who belonged to that department.

Lord *Cochrane* said, there was no secret in the documents, and they were necessary for his defence.

Mr. *Sturges Bourne* said, the noble lord moved for the papers in so low a tone, that persons on that side of the House could not collect the nature of them. He therefore requested the noble lord to put off his motion for a few minutes.—Mr. Croker soon after entered, when

Lord *Cochrane* again stated the documents he wished to have laid before the House. These were, 1. A copy of lord Cochrane's letter to the secretary of the Admiralty dated February 5th 1814. 2. A letter from the secretary of the Admiralty to lord Cochrane, dated February 7th 1814. 3. Lord Cochrane's letter to the secretary of the Admiralty dated March 8th 1814. 4. Letter from the secretary of the Admiralty to lord Cochrane of the same date. 5. The date of the hon. major William Erskine Cochrane's appointment as cornet in the 15th regiment of dragoons, and the date of the first official return after his joining the said regiment. 6. Extracts from the muster books of his majesty's ships Thetis, Africa, Resolution, Foudroyant, Barfleur, Queen Charlotte, Genereux, and Speedy, of lord Cochrane's time of service onboard those ships, the stations whereon they were employed during such time; and a return of any period during which he was not mustered as present by the said books. 7. The time of the arrival of the official return from the 15th regiment of dragoons, dated January 25th 1814. 8. Return of the dates of the official dispatches from the British army under the command of the duke of Wellington, between the 1st and the 14th of February 1814, and the times of their respective receipts."

Sir *Joseph Yorke* said, that no objection existed against the production of the documents connected with the naval department.

Mr. *Lockhart* asked, whether any of these papers were offered to be read at the trial, and, being offered, were refused?

Lord *Cochrane* said, he moved for them as the means of proving that many imputations thrown on him in the course of the trial were not true.

Mr. *Lockhart* said, that the only way in which the noble lord could make use of these documents, was, to show some fact, that would have been useful to him, on his trial, but the opportunity of proving which had been refused.

The motions were agreed to.

COURT OF SESSION IN SCOTLAND.] Mr. *J. P. Grant* begged to inquire of the right hon. gentleman opposite, whether a paper which had been moved for by a right hon. friend of his (sir John Newport) had been received from the court of session in Scotland? He would take that opportunity of correcting an inference which had been drawn from some observations which had been made—as if that court had been guilty of disrespect to the House, in not complying with its order. He understood the fact to be, that other orders of the House which had gone through the treasury, had been communicated directly to the president of the court of session, and had been promptly complied with. But the order in question going through the secretary of state's office, had been directed, as he understood was the practice of that office, to the lord advocate for Scotland, and thus had not reached the president of the court till parliament had risen; when the commission appointed by the House to inquire into these matters being sitting at Edinburgh, it was thought by the officers of the court sufficient to make the return to that commission, which was accordingly done. This might be a mistake, but it was by no means a wilful or intentional disrespect to the House; and whether a mistake or not, was hardly imputable to the court, or the learned judge who presided there, since the order was addressed not to him but to the lord advocate. Having mentioned that learned judge, he thought it right to say, that he was convinced no person was less likely to be guilty of intentional disrespect to that House. No person had ever differed more from that learned judge in political opinion, than he (Mr. Grant), but it was but justice to say—as he did, not merely on his own opinion, but on that of others on whose opinions he placed greater reliance than on his own—that it was impossible for any one to have conducted himself since his elevation to the bench with more fairness and candour than that right hon. person; and that in all appointments to his court, when he had been consulted, he had uniformly given the weight of his influence and advice, without regard to party, or to political considerations, in favour of those whom he thought from their talents, and their learning, the most fit to feel these important situations.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* concurred with the hon. member in believing that no disrespect was intended by the learned judge alluded to. As to the question put by the hon. member, the only answer which he could give without inquiry was, that he had not yet seen the return, but hoped it would be laid before the House in a short time.

The *Lord Advocate* of Scotland observed, that the fact of the return not having been made, was not to be attributed to any intentional disrespect on the part of the learned judge. The order had been sent to him (the lord advocate) and he had transmitted it to the court of session, by which it was sent to the commissioners who had been appointed to examine into the courts of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and who were then receiving information from the court of session. He had no doubt that the return would be soon before the House.

Mr. *Abercrombie* regretted the order had not been transmitted in the first instance to the court by which the return was to be made; but he could not suffer the present opportunity to pass without expressing his satisfaction at the conduct of the commissioners for inquiring into the state of the several courts. Their object was the same for which his right hon. friend (Sir J. Newport) had exerted himself so much, and from the manner in which they had hitherto discharged their duty, he was certain that his right hon. friend would not have interfered in the course which had been adopted. At the same time he did not urge this as a defence for having no return made to the order. He thought no person had a right to dispute the order of the House, or to use their own opinion on it further than by paying it immediate obedience.

The *Lord Advocate* of Scotland repeated his former assertion, that no blame could be attributed to the court of session for not having made the return. Their conduct arose more from mistake than neglect.

Mr. *Abercrombie* observed, that such mistakes might be prevented, if every order of the House were sent directly to the officer who was to make the return to it, and not by such a circuitous route as through the office of the secretary of state.

Mr. *Tierney* said, it was rumoured that an increase of salary was required for the individual filling the office of lord advocate of Scotland. The matter had been mentioned before, but no answer was returned. Perhaps the learned gentleman would himself state, whether he had made such an application; and if so, whether it had been successful or not?

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he had never heard of any application on the subject.

The *Lord Advocate* said, there had neither been an increase nor diminution in the salary of the office, since he had held it. He never had such a thing in his contemplation.

Mr. *Tierney* wished to know, whether an increase was not about to be granted to some of the minor officers?

The *Lord Advocate* said, that was a question which he neither ought nor could answer. Government had got many hints on this, as well as on other subjects; but, as they had not adopted the latter, perhaps they would not take those given on this point.

PETITIONS AGAINST THE PROPERTY TAX.] Petitions against the property tax were presented from Steyning, Clifton, Dartmouth, Hardness, Perth, Chulmleigh, Witham Friars, Shrewsbury, Wiveliscombe, Honiton, and from the inhabitants of St. Giles and St. George's, Bloomsbury, and from the agriculturalists of the hundreds of Burnham and Stoke.

Mr. *Tierney* was anxious to know when the chancellor of the exchequer intended to bring forward his motion respecting the property tax. It appeared to him, that, in point of form, it could not be introduced, in a committee of ways and means, until the vote of the committee of supply, to the amount which it was calculated to produce, was agreed to.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* was anxious that the property tax should be brought forward under every advantage of the most serious consideration, as well as with a proper respect for parliamentary form. He could not propose it, until a sum of money was called for, commensurate with its amount. Unless the vote of the committee of supply demanded it, he could not, in compliance with parliamentary form, propose it in a committee of ways and means.

Mr. *Tierney* said, the right hon. gentleman had explained, very correctly, the true mode of parliamentary proceeding.

Now he hoped, that some gentleman of more weight than himself would, on Monday next, bring forward a resolution on this subject, that the country might distinctly understand what the sense of the House was—a resolution that would have nothing to do with the ways and means, but which would call on the House to say, whether this was a tax that ought to be continued in time of peace.

Lord *Nugent*, on presenting the petition from the agriculturalists of the hundreds of Burnham and Stoke, in Buckinghamshire, read a letter which he had received from a respectable farmer in that county, with whom, he assured the House, he had not the least connexion, and whose name he only knew. The letter stated, that these were times which excused of themselves the liberty of addressing this letter to his lordship—that the people in that part of the country felt more than the petition could possibly express. How the chancellor of the exchequer was to raise the tax, he could not imagine; but he conceived that it would be a very troublesome job for any man to collect money, when it was known that he was living beyond his income. The poorer classes of the people were thrown upon the parish, because the farmers were not able to pay for their work. The parishes were very poor, and expected to be much poorer, and the tax was not the more relished because it was to be forced down the throats of the people by a standing army. These, his lordship continued, were the sentiments, not of a political incendiary, but of a man who never meddled with politics until the necessity of the times compelled him.

Mr. *Bennet*, on presenting the petition from the merchants, bankers, and tradesmen, of Shrewsbury, against the property tax, stated, that he most cordially agreed with the petitioners, in thinking that the faith of government was pledged not to renew this tax in time of peace, and in condemning, as unconstitutional, the keeping up of so large a military force. If ministers were hardy enough to propose the measure to this country, he hoped they would meet with that discomfiture they so well merited. But, till he saw it, he would not believe that the influence of the crown was so great in that House, as to enable ministers to carry the measure against the prayers and tears of the people. He trusted that ministers would consider in time, the great distress of the country, and put some other limits to the burthens of the people than their patience in hearing them.

Mr. *Dickenson*, on presenting the petition from Wiveliscombe, observed, that among other evils of which the petitioners complained, was one of vital importance. It related to the general decrease in the quantity of land sown this year with wheat, as well as the quantity thrown back on the hands of the owners, and now lying uncultivated, as the farmers, from the low price of wheat, could not afford to cultivate them. Whatever might be said about the faith of ministers on particular points, there was one general system of faith in all governments, which was an engagement so to support the interests of agriculture, that the people should not run the risk of being starved.

Mr. *Brougham* said, he held in his hand a petition from the town of Honiton in Devon, against the property tax, which, amongst other facts, complained that the most galling and intolerable part of the system was, the compelling the petitioners to lay open their concerns to a train of inspectors and spies; and they trusted the House would refuse its sanction to the measure under any modifications whatever. On this subject he was enabled, from what had very lately come to his knowledge, to offer a very striking commentary. A very respectable person, a ship-broker, residing at no great distance from that House, had occasion to purchase an article at a cheesemonger's, which he received wrapped up in a paper that proved to be, to his no small astonishment, the return of one of his friends and neighbours to the commissioners of the property tax. He called on the gentleman and stated the circumstance, and they both called on the cheesemonger. The tradesman told them he had lately bought a great lot of waste paper of the same kind, and they found, upon farther inquiry, that the paper in question had been exposed to sale by the commissioners, and consisted of the whole returns of what was commonly called their jurisdiction, but which he should call their inquisition. Thus it appeared the private affairs of all persons were exposed, not only to the commissioners, but to the world, by their returns being exposed to sale as waste paper. If he had seen no reason before to oppose the tax, this circumstance alone would induce him to do it. For it would seem, that all attempts for making the commissioners keep faith with those under their inquisition were unavailing; and there appeared no great chance of making these persons keep the secrets of individuals, unless they took two or three others to assist them, by which all the affairs that came before them would be verbally exposed.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* wished to say a few words, in reply to what had been said by the hon. and learned member. He remembered that a fact had been mentioned some time ago similar to that which had just been stated: an inquiry then took place, and it appeared that the commissioners of London had always been particularly careful to destroy all the returns which had been made, excepting a very small portion which it was necessary to preserve for the purposes of their business; but it at that time also appeared, that by some accident or other, some few of the returns had been suffered to go out of their hands. Something of the same kind, he had no doubt, had in the present instance taken place; but he could take upon himself positively to deny, that any of these papers had been sold, as had been asserted by the hon. and learned gentleman. He did really believe that no such practice had ever been resorted to; and if the proper inquiry were made, there was little doubt but that the hon. and learned member would find himself to have been misinformed. With respect to the general complaint of this, as it was termed, inquisitorial proceeding, it would be recollected, that when the tax was formerly introduced, that grievance was in a great degree removed by the introduction of a clause in the bill in 1803, by which certain persons were allowed to choose their own referees, to whom they might refer their accounts, instead of the commissioners. By this means nine persons out of ten made no returns, and no one person was obliged to make any return, excepting for the purpose of obtaining relief. This clause was, however, afterwards abandoned, and it was now in the power of the legislature to re-insert it in the act about to be proposed. His only wish was, that a fair and reasonable assessment might be made, such as two fair-dealing honourable men might make, which, however, should be subject to the examination of the commissioners. He could not see what reason any man could have to object to this mode of proceeding. With regard to what had been urged as to the hardship of this tax upon the poorer classes, he had already observed upon the very small extent to which this tax had been charged upon those persons. He had stated, that out of 1,131,000, only 266,000 made any returns; and therefore three out of four had never paid the tax. Having thus given a statement of the number of the poorer classes of tradesmen who were exempted, he would now state a similar return which had been made with regard to the farming interest. The total amount of the families assessed under the tenants' tax was 589,000. Of these families 432,500 paid under the reduced scale, having an income of less than 150*l.* The persons paying at the rate of 200*l.* a year, being the full rate, were 42,000 only. He would now show the benefit the proposed modifications would have upon this class of men. The number now exempted was 114,000, and the number that would be exempted under the new modifications was 527,000 out of 589,000*l.* The number paying the diminished and abated rate was reduced to 55,500, and the number of farmers paying at 5 per cent.,—that was 10*l.* out of 600*l.* or one sixtieth—was 45,000 only. It would, therefore, be seen of what great benefit these proposed modifications would be to the agricultural interest. But he had been told that this alleviation was a dishonest proceeding. Now, as he conceived, the dishonesty just amounted to this—that the farmer, who made a reduced profit, was now to pay a very reduced rate. The farmer was not able to show the amount of his annual profits, and therefore the legislature had very properly assessed upon the rent. Whether this scale was too high or too low, it was now premature to discuss, and would be considered in due time. It could then be also considered by parliament what further relief it would be proper to propose, particularly to farmers who had sustained nearly a total loss of the produce of their land. He should always be disposed to listen with attention to any fair case which might be made out, or to prevent the inconveniencies which he was sensible necessarily arose from the disclosure of private concerns; but the house would admit that it might be inferred, by the abandonment of the clause of 1803, that none was required now. He begged it to be understood, that if any more effectual relief could be suggested, it would be listened to with the greatest attention. In every other case it was, he believed, agreed, that the grievance of disclosure had been entirely removed; but, even in that particular branch of trade where disclosure was necessary, it would be seen that a man might be engaged in many firms, and in many trades, and might contrive to bring his affairs to such a point as to prevent any man knowing any thing of his concerns; because it was evident, that it was not necessary that the commissioners should know every minute particular. Under these circumstances, then, he trusted that it would be seen that this measure was actually not of so harsh a nature as had been conceived, and he hoped that gentlemen would wait until the appointed time for a full, fair, and deliberate discussion on the subject.

Mr. *Brougham* said he did not mean to allude to the London commissioners in particular; he objected to the whole system. The right hon. gentleman would be very glad, it seemed, to pay attention to any modification which might be pointed out. He believed, as he had stated on a former night, that ministers were ready to receive the tax on any terms. But he distrusted their modifications. The right hon. gentleman, like a personage whom he resembled only in name, appeared ready to come to any terms, in his extremity. The personage to whom he alluded was said to have fallen sick; and, being taken with a sudden fit of piety, he declared his intention of becoming monk; but the moment his health was restored, he forgot his promises. He believed, if the right hon. gentleman once carried the tax, that he also would act in the same manner.

Mr. *Baring* said there had been a statement, very conveniently dressed out, in a treasury paper, for the purpose of making the measure palatable; it stated how many millions of mechanics, with an income under 70 or 80*l.* a year, were totally exempted from this tax; from which it was meant to be inferred, that those persons had no interest in the question. But it must be seen, that all these persons were not only obliged to pay indirectly to the tax, but were also all indirectly connected with the fate of their masters, whose reduced state, from stagnation in trade, must affect all who were concerned under them, in the same way as the farmers' labourers were affected by the distresses of the farmers. The relieving of one part of the people for the purpose of burthening another, was a project unworthy of the minister of a great nation. The relieving of persons by remission on account of distress was just; but it was not so generally, if the relief were only partially applied. The great point would be to direct our attention to the principle of the tax, which was established for the support of the war; and therefore the thing which the country gentlemen would have to consider, was, that they have been establishing a measure of finance, which government may have recourse to upon occasion, and screw it up by degrees, like the little advances they have made from time to time upon the tea and the sugar tax. He wished the idea to be inculcated upon every man's mind, that this tax was of such a nature, that nothing could justify it but the most arduous war, such as we had just emerged from. If this tax were eventually renewed, he hoped the tenant would be exempted from it. The Chancellor of the Exchequer thought the objection to the measure which had been spoken of on account of the disclosure which individuals were compelled to make was not great, as a clause allowing the parties to make their returns to two referees had not been much acted upon. Mr. Baring was not surprised that few persons should have availed themselves of that clause, as the trouble and embarrassment which it led to were not to be endured, and were, if possible, worse than the common course of proceeding. He condemned the property tax for this—it took 10 per cent. from the trader's profits in one concern, and allowed him no drawback for the losses he might sustain in the other; thus a shipowner who might gain on one vessel, was obliged to pay the property tax on his profits on her, though he should sustain a loss to an equal amount on the other. He was convinced, that the representations made concerning the tax were any thing but exaggerated.

Mr. *Preston* argued in strong terms against the property tax, and dwelt more particularly on the evils arising from the disclosures which it compelled of the private affairs of individuals. He spoke of its effects in the county of Devon, where the assessments of individuals were already generally known. His greatest objection was still against the principle. It was the illegitimate offspring, the bastard of the constitution; and it was attempted to seize for it the inheritance of the country. They might proceed in this way, and make any set of commissioners a court of chancery. Sooner than agree to oppression and unconstitutional taxation of this nature and extent, he would humbly petition his royal highness to release him from his allegiance. Rather than be the slave of a tax-gatherer at home, he would submit to be the subject of a country of which he was not a native. The present system tended to overturn all those rights for which our ancestors bled.

The petitions were ordered to lie on the table.

Distressed State of Agriculture.] The order of the day being read,

Mr. *Western* rose and addressed the House as follows:*

In pursuance of the notice I gave some time ago, I now rise to move, "That this House do resolve itself into a committee of the whole House, to take into consideration the distressed state of the agriculture of the United Kingdom." It has been the practice of this House so to do for the purpose of more convenient deliberation and inquiry in times of peculiar danger and difficulty; and I cannot help feeling thoroughly convinced, that it will be admitted, that none were ever more critical than the present.

I cannot indeed anticipate any objection to this motion, unless it should by some hon. members be apprehended that we should excite additional alarm throughout the country; and, perhaps, create expectations which it would be impossible to realize. Neither of these objections have, however, in my opinion, much weight; in respect to the first of them, I can only say, that the alarm actually existing can hardly by any possibility be increased; and as to the second, however we might lament our inability to fulfil expectations, it is no sufficient reason for our refusing to investigate the causes and extent of our present unexampled distress. I am ready to admit, that the legislature does by no means possess that power on such occasions as the present, which the public are too apt to imagine: we cannot by an act of parliament in an instant alleviate evils, the result of a concurrence of an infinite variety of circumstances. Their sanguine hopes therefore may not be realized; but that is no reason whatever for turning our backs upon the subject. The public must not be kept in the dark either as to the extent or limits of our power. We must give our most patient and attentive consideration as well in regard to extent as to the cause of distress, and possible means of relief; and in the result the public must be convinced, that every thing in our power we will accomplish.

Since I first gave notice of this motion (which is now a considerable time ago) I have received communications on the subject from all parts of the empire; and they do altogether form a picture of national distress quite unexampled, I am confident, in any former time. I had selected a certain number of these letters from the rest, which appeared to me the most conclusive and intelligent, with an intention to read them to the House; but I am aware how tedious written statements generally are; and upon reflection, I have thought that the real state of the country must be more satisfactorily represented by hon. members, than by the result of any information, however extensive, which I have had it in my power to collect.

In order to put the House in possession of circumstances which would be conclusive as to the real state of the country, I have called for various documents, which yet are not returned; I allude to an order made by the House upon sheriffs to give an account of all process upon the body or goods of the people in their respective counties, upon a comparison of the last three years; also an order has been given for an account of Exchequer process against persons for non-payment of taxes. These are not yet come in; and I am afraid indeed when they do, they will not give us a full representation of the calamity, as a variety of cases of distress and ruin will not come within the scope of these returns.

I have received a few of these returns through the hands of correspondents, and I will shortly state to the House their result. The first account is from the county of Norfolk, the agriculture of which is in high repute; and the distresses of which, in all probability, hardly equal those of other counties; at all events, they may be taken as a fair average of the state of the whole kingdom. It appears in Norfolk, that the number of bailable writs have increased from 540 in the year 1814, to 670 in the year 1815;

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* From the original edition printed for Budd and Calkin, Pall Mall.

the number of executions, in the same period, from 96 to 174. My correspondent observes, that this account clearly shows the distress of the county; but I apprehend, he says, the sheriff's office does not exhibit any thing like the full extent of the evil, for it does not comprehend bankruptcies, deeds of trust, or composition; nor cases of distress for rent, except when the goods are replevied, which has rarely happened during the last year, probably because the parties have been unable to discern any prospect of relief from a postponement of a sale of their effects. Farmers and graziers, if not otherwise traders, are not subject to the bankrupt laws, and the great and almost universal mode by which the affairs of insolvent farmers are settled, is by deeds of trust, or composition: and the only record of such failure is to be met with in the provincial newspapers. These observations are certainly correct, and therefore, as I before observed, the returns from the sheriff's office will not give a full picture of the distress of the country; they serve, however, as far as they go, incontestably to prove the difficulties in which all classes of the community appear to be involved. From Suffolk I have received a similar return, and there I learn the number of bailable writs and executions have increased in the same period from 430 to 850.

In the county of Worcester they have increased from 640 to 890; in which county, I am told, that exchequer processes to levy issues on parishes for arrears of taxes, the first moiety of the property tax, due April 1815, against 46 parishes in arrear; for assessed taxes, ditto, 47 parishes; the remainder of property tax, 48 parishes; assessed taxes, due Michaelmas last, 45; total 186. The county of Worcester contains about 216 parishes, so that four-fifths of the parishes are now in arrear.

In Sussex I have an account from one division of the county, containing two hundreds, in one of which, consisting of 32 parishes, 26 are in arrear either for property or assessed taxes; and the other, consisting of about 20, fifteen are in arrear. The county of Sussex is divided into six hundreds, and my correspondent informs me he has no reason to hope that the others are in a better situation.

I have an account from the Isle of Ely, which appears to evince proofs of distress even beyond those I have already stated. In one hundred of the Isle of Ely, containing about one-third part of the island, the number of arrests in 1812 and 1813 were 50, in 1814 and 1815 two hundred and three; the number of executions, in the first of those periods, 7; in the last, 60; amount of executions in the first period, 765*l.*, in the last, 18,522*l.* In addition to the above, the distresses for rent and drainage taxes, which have been taken within the last two years, amount to 11,000*l.* and within the same period, in the vicinity of Ely, several farmers have failed, whose debts altogether amounted to 72,500*l.* and the creditors, in hardly any instance, have received a dividend. It appears also, there are 19 farms now untenanted in Ely, and the parishes immediately adjoining. These accounts are certainly alarming to the greatest degree; I can hardly venture to pledge myself to their precise accuracy in every item, but I do not entertain a doubt of their being substantially faithful and correct. All the letters I have received, all the communications that have been personally made to me, concur in giving the same deplorable picture of distress universally pervading that portion of the community whose capital is engaged in agriculture, as well as all those numerous classes whose employment is dependent thereon. I will therefore, Sir, no longer dwell upon the proofs of our distress, nor the extent of it, but endeavour to examine the circumstances that have occasioned such unexampled difficulties and embarrassments, and which have not come upon us gradually, but appear almost, as it were in a moment, to have overwhelmed the whole country.

Between two and three years ago agriculture was in a flourishing and prosperous state, and yet, within the short period which has since elapsed, thousands have been already ruined, and destruction seems to impend over the property of all those whose capital is engaged in the cultivation of the soil. From what causes, I say, can such events have arisen?—Are they the effects of excessive taxation, of the enormous amount of the national debt?—Are they the consequences of our extensive paper circulation, which now appears to have been in a great measure withdrawn?—Are they occasioned by the pressure of the tithe, or the severe burthen of the poor-rate?—Is it from any, or from all of these causes, that the evil has originated? I have no hesitation in saying, that it is not to one or two, but to a combination of all these causes, we must attribute our distress. Our national debt and our taxes have been carried to an extent unknown, I believe, to any other country in the universe; our paper currency has been carried also to an extent quite unexampled, and, I believe, will be found to have created a principal source of our misfortune. The poor-rates have been singularly oppressive; tithes, also, have been felt in proportion as larger capital has been required to cultivate the land. Yet, in spite of all these burthens, up to the middle of 1813, agriculture did sustain them, and, under the weight of their united pressure, contributed to make most rapid advances. How then are we to account for such a change? There are those, I know, who attribute it to the return of peace, but I do not entertain that opinion. The loss of the war demand, no doubt, has had an effect, but this, I should think, is counteracted by the cutting off the foreign supply of grain under the Act of last session: besides, by referring to the account upon the table, we shall see that the great fall in the price of corn took place prior to the possible anticipation of the return of peace. In the early part of January, 1813, the price of wheat was as high as 120*s.* per quarter; in November it was as low as 75*s.* or 76*s.* By the accounts of contracts made at the victualling office, Portsmouth, the contract for wheat appears to be, on the 1st of January, 123*s.* 10*d.*, in November, 67*s.* 10*d.* At Plymouth, 121*s.* 9*d.* in February; in September, 86*s.* At Deptford there appears to be no contract for wheat, but in February a contract for flour was taken at 100*s.* 3*d.* per sack, and in November at 65*s.* At this latter period, no confidence or expectation of returning peace could have influenced the market; and, therefore, to that cause the fall of price cannot be at all attributed. It is also to be observed, that the very year after the return of peace in 1782, the price of grain rose to two or three shillings, and upon an average of five years compared with the last five years of the American war, five shillings per quarter. After the peace of 1763, the price advanced from 1*l.* 16*s.* to 2*l.* 1*s.*; the year following, and upon an average of five years, advanced 7*s.* 6*d.* a quarter. These circumstances concurring induce me to believe, that the return of peace has had very little influence upon the rapid fall of the markets for grain. I return then to a consideration of all the other circumstances before-mentioned, and will endeavour to trace their operation from that which appears to me to have been the primary cause, though, no doubt, effects immediately following have operated as causes more powerful, perhaps, than that which was the original. The first, and obvious cause, I say, has been a redundant supply in the markets, a supply considerably beyond the demand, and that created chiefly by the produce of our own agriculture. The importation of foreign corn has, no doubt, in some degree, contributed to the creation of that redundance; but as it did not exceed in the last two years the average amount of the last ten, it is evident that the surplus now existing is chiefly ascribable to the extension of our own growth.

Permit me, Sir, here to call to the recollection of the House the effect of a small surplus or deficit of supply above or below the demand of the market. It is perfectly well known that if there is a small deficiency of supply, the price will rise in a ratio far beyond any proportion of such deficiency; the effect indeed is almost incalculable: so likewise on a surplus of supply beyond demand, the price will fall in a ratio exceeding almost tenfold the amount of such surplus. Corn, being an article of prime necessity, is peculiarly liable to such variation; upon a deficit of supply the price is further advanced by alarm; and upon a surplus, it is further diminished by the difficulty the growers have in contracting the amount of their growth, compared to the means which other manufacturers possess of limiting the amount of their manufactures.

I have drawn the attention of the House to these considerations, in order to show that it is not necessary the surplus should be so large as might at first appear to be requisite, to occasion that primary depression of the price of grain which I attribute to it. I am aware, that so fixed has been the opinion for many years of our inability to grow enough for our own consumption, that it will still be difficult to convince many people that we have actually created a supply beyond our demand. I have indeed always maintained that it was easily practicable so to do; that we had abundant means for the purpose, and that from lands wholly uncultivated, as well as from those which, notwithstanding our improved agriculture were yet very miserably farmed, we might extract resources, for more than double the amount of our present population. The quantity of corn imported I have always considered as very trifling, when compared with the amount of our aggregate consumption, though it may operate very powerfully to depress a market already filled, especially as the extent of what might be drawn from foreign countries cannot be ascertained. The average import of the last twelve years has not exceeded a million of quarters of all sorts of grain. In 1811 and 1812 we exported more than we imported; and though a large proportion was sent out of the kingdom for the supply of our own subjects, yet we had at that time a great many foreigners and prisoners within the kingdom. Let the House also recollect what vast imports have been drawn from Ireland, and the quantity of wheat and other grain that has been furnished within these few years to this metropolis from Scotland, from whence formerly none was ever received. In short, throughout all parts of the empire, during the last twenty years, agriculture has certainly advanced with rapid strides. The full effect of all our improvements has just been completely realized; and two or three good harvests from this extended and improved agriculture, together with continued import, and demand reduced, have occasioned such a surplus in the market, as very obviously accounts for the first depression of the price. The farmers soon became alarmed, and began to experience distress. Their alarm was increased by the rejection of the corn bills of 1813 and 1814, and by the apparent determination of the public to resist any measure of that sort, and likewise by an opinion generally entertained, that the peace would necessarily restore the low prices which existed prior to the war. They felt also conscious of their own want of resources, and that they should be soon hurried into the market, and compelled to take any price that was offered. It has been, I know, universally believed by the public, that farmers had acquired large fortunes in the course of the last ten years: a more erroneous opinion, however, never was formed, and so the result has proved. It has been said, that the prices of grain have been so enormously high, that the farmers must have realized great fortunes. Now, Sir, I deny in the first place, that prices have been enormously high, compared with the advanced charges of every kind to which agriculture has been liable,—nay, I am surprised they have not been much higher. In the years of scarcity indeed, the prices were very high; but upon an average of ten years they have not been so. Compare the prices of a period sometime back with the average price of the last ten years, take the amount of taxation in each period, and I think the House will see that I am fully warranted in making this statement. The average price of wheat during ten years prior to the commencement of the war in 1792, was 47*s.* per quarter, and the average charge of taxes and loans, fifteen millions per annum. The average price of wheat during ten years ending with 1812, that is, excluding the two years of scarcity, and the two last years of low price, was 88*s.* per quarter; the amount of taxes and loans seventy-five millions per annum. Here then we find the amount of taxation in effect quintupled, whilst the price of corn has not doubled; in addition to which, the proportional amount of the circulating medium has in the last period immensely increased.

I say then, considering all these circumstances, combined with the vast increase of burthens to which agriculture is exclusively liable, and we shall find that we are not only not entitled to call the price of the last ten years enormously high, but we must rather be surprised that it has not risen to a far greater extent. Thus then, though agriculture has advanced rapidly, yet the profits have not been large; and such has been the enterprising spirit of late years, which farmers have evinced equally with all other classes of society, that their earnings have been immediately devoted to further improvements, and their capitals have been sunk in the amelioration of their lands, which in a thousand instances will now turn out to have been irrecoverably thrown away. As to the extravagance with which they have been charged, it is mere prejudice to ascribe to them a greater portion of it than is equally attributable to other members of the community. The truth is, as fast as they could realize or borrow money, they employed it in the purchase or improvement of land; and the facilities of obtaining credit in late years have universally stimulated this practice. In this situation, can we be surprised at their alarm and their distress? The price continued to fall till their property diminished one-half, and their creditors press for the repayment of advances, which they now begin to consider no longer safe. In this state of things confidence is universally shaken, and away goes an immense proportion of the circulating medium of the country banks, which in fact was founded upon the value of the products of the land. Here then we begin to feel the consequences of a loss of that circulating medium, which before had been so abundant; and it is impossible to calculate what may be the extent of the evils that may arise from the rapid withdrawing so extensive a quantity of currency, with which the country banks, by issue of their notes, and by other means, furnished to the demand of the public. I am far from denying the advantages of a paper currency, more especially when kept within limits, by the power of the holder to demand payment in specie. Unlimited as it has been, I attribute very much to its operation the vast extension of our commercial, manufacturing, and agricultural productions. A paper currency, or circulating medium, is in fact a credit currency, which has the effect of converting a dormant capital into a state of immediate activity; whilst at the same time, by its increasing abundance, it enhances the prices of all articles produced. I believe all writers upon political economy have agreed, that an increasing amount of circulating medium, together with the consequent advance of price of all commodities, has been uniformly beneficial to the industrious class of the community. These effects have been strongly felt by the increasing amount of this credit circulation of late years, whilst at the same time the power it has afforded of employing capital, has multiplied all the products of industry in a very rapid degree. To exemplify its effects, take the case of an enterprising farmer, for instance; let us suppose him, with a limited capital, in the occupation of an extensive farm; at the end of harvest he sees his yards and barns loaded with the fruits of an abundant season, he is anxious to make improvements in a variety of ways, but has not the means of so doing till his crops can be brought to market; instead of waiting that event, the facilities of credit in late years have enabled him at once to command a sum on the security of this corn, and thus he is enabled, with a rapidity unknown in former times, to improve those sources of production, which keep continually multiplying as they advance, till at length they have overgrown the demand. Other manufactures, I believe, have increased from the same cause, and in the same proportion; so that, in fact, they have also overloaded the market. The demand for all commodities, and the home and foreign markets, are completely overdone. It is true that the war demand, in the first instance, gave the first moving spring to the production of corn and all other articles; the consequence of the war likewise, by giving us more complete possession of the home and foreign markets, has powerfully operated, and then followed the magical effects of this extensive credit circulation which I have endeavoured to describe. The period is now come, when we are to experience the evil attendant upon such a system, the extent of which it is impossible to estimate. If an abundant credit circulation is productive of the advantages above stated, it must be admitted likewise that it is attended with great danger under any circumstances of national difficulty or alarm. If any large class of the opulent part of the people fall into distress, calamities must ensue, to which we otherwise should not be so much exposed; and we cannot be surprised, that under the pressure which the owners and occupiers of land at present sustain, difficulties unparalleled should have arisen. Let us, Sir, consider for a moment, what the amount in value of the annual product of the land has been. An estimate of this sort, I know, is difficult; but I will form it upon data, which I think will be sufficient for the present purpose: the rental under the property tax act is fifty-seven millions, the gross produce of the land cannot be less than four times that amount; it used to be reckoned three; I believe now it is nearer five; but I will take it at four, which gives two hundred and twenty-eight millions for the annual produce of the land—suppose two hundred millions. The value of these products is fallen one half since 1812. Here is a loss of one hundred millions of annual receipt by the farmers; a diminution, also, of one half of the value of farming stock has taken place; upon which stock, and annual produce, the whole currency of the country banks has in fact been founded. Can we be surprised from such a loss of property that such consequences should have followed—the whole community going on, as it were, upon credit? Such a change has been sufficient almost to produce a financial revolution; and what consequences are yet to follow, I am quite at a loss even to conjecture. At one time, the excessive abundance of circulating medium created the greatest alarm from the extreme to which it appeared verging in that direction. Now this abundance has vanished, and it may so completely disappear, that the prices of commodities may fall to the standard at which they were 150 years ago. I say, there is nothing which will necessarily prevent its so falling, nor are there any means to force a re-issue of this paper currency, which has thus vanished in a moment; nothing but a revival of the value of that on which it was founded can accomplish this object. If the value of land and the produce of land shall be in any degree restored, confidence will in proportion return, and banks will by degrees resume their credits and re-issue their notes, though probably not to the same extent they have done.

There is one other cause to which I also attribute in part the progressive fall in the price of grain, though, like some other causes, it has been an effect in the first instance; and that is, diminished consumption, in consequence of diminished earnings of the laborious classes. However fast the price of provisions has fallen, the earnings of labour have recently fallen faster still; so that those who live by the labour of their hands cannot command so much of the comforts of life as when they were nearly double the price which they now are. Thus we may go on, unless a change speedily takes place, in a course of progressive impoverishment, the consequence of progressively diminishing consumption.

And here, Sir, we see one most alarming consequence of our present situation; the laborious classes are suffering in a degree quite unexampled—they appear to be starving, as it were, in the midst of plenty: the productive industry of the country is absolutely suspended; and the sources of future harvests are rapidly falling into decay. Nor is it only from the deprivation of the necessaries and comforts of life, that the laborious peasantry at present suffer—they are more seriously grieved at the loss of their independence; they can no longer command a market for their labour; their labour is their property, and a property it is—infinitely valuable to the state. So long as there is a demand for it, they can treat upon equal terms with those to whom it is necessary. Now they are obliged to beg for employment, however industrious they may be; their industry is no longer wanted; and an exchange for it by their employers is considered as a favour. Thus situated, it is impossible their minds should not be irritated, and their feelings injured; they cannot fail to consider themselves degraded, their independence lost, and their moral character will be inevitably changed and deteriorated; and there is nothing, I think, more seriously to be apprehended from our present distress than the effects thus produced on the lower class of people.

Now, Sir, let us turn from the contemplation of this gloomy picture, and consider what prospect there is of remedy, or what means we have of affording relief. If I am right in attributing the primary cause of all these calamities to the effects of a surplus in the market beyond the demand, the remedy must be found in taking off that surplus, or it will remedy itself in a short time by a reduction of supply. The danger is, that the present abundant supply should be converted into an alarming deficiency: nay, there is not only a danger, but a certainty that such will very soon be the case. The diminution of the produce must be rapid in the extreme. No man who has the least knowledge of farming can fail to see how speedily the growth of corn will be reduced; nor can we expect to avoid an absolute scarcity in the course of two or three years, if the difficulties under which the farmers labour should continue so long. How avert this calamity? How improve the markets, and relieve the farmers' distress? are questions, no doubt, very difficult to solve. But I cannot help thinking some measures might be adopted, which would materially contribute to their assistance, as well as to the general benefit of the community at large. The relief must come, in the first instance, partly from an increased price of grain and other produce of land, the consequence of an increased demand; partly from diminished taxation, which, whilst it reduces the cost price of the article, will also increase the consumption.

This latter mode of relief is the more obvious, and infinitely more to be desired. At the same time, no diminution of taxes can be sufficient to relieve, unless accompanied by an advanced price; that is to say, no adequate diminution of taxes can be accomplished, if faith is to be preserved to the public creditor. The lowest possible peace establishment, combined with the interest of the national debt, would amount to 50,000,000*l*. per annum. It is indeed impossible to bring the charges upon the public so low; but supposing it were practicable, 50,000,000*l.* per annum could not be raised upon the country, if the prices of grain and other commodities were reduced to what they were prior to the war, when those charges amounted only to 15,000,000*l.* The taxes which press most severely upon agriculture, as well from their nature as their amount, are the different taxes upon barley, in the course of the various process which prepares it for the use of the consumer. The total amount of the tax upon malt, beer, and spirit, is 12,350,000*l.* per annum, a sum so enormous, as almost to appear incredible, and which, by its operation, has certainly very much diminished the consumption. I am really at a loss to imagine how the agriculture of the country has been enabled to sustain such a burthen. If we add to this sum the property tax paid by the tenant, the tax on agricultural horses, and the duty on hops, we shall find an amount exceeding the whole revenue of the state prior to the commencement of the war.

By looking to the accounts upon the table, which show the quantity of barley malted in each year from 1790 to the present time, it will be seen that the average quantity malted in the first ten years exceeds by 420,000 quarters the average quantity of the last ten years. This, however, does not exhibit half the effect which may be fairly attributed to the effects of taxation on the barley market. To estimate which, we must consider the increase of population which has taken place since the year 1790, and which, by the reports upon our table, and by the last population act, amounts in Great Britain to 2,000,000; that is, an increase from 10 to 12,000,000. If then, in 1790, the consumption of barley was 3,390,000 quarters, which was the case, by 10,000,000 of people, the consumption of 2,000,000 would be 678,000, which consequently we must add to the 420,000 above stated.

Here then we have a loss of market, occasioned by the excessive taxation to which the article is subject, for nearly 1,100,000 quarters, a quantity exceeding in amount the average importation of the last ten years of foreign grain of every sort.

That these consequences have arisen from taxation, there can, I think, be no doubt. In the first ten years the price of barley was upon an average 31*s.* per quarter; in the last ten, 41*s.* 9*d.* per quarter. In the first ten the duty was 10*s.* 7*d.* per quarter; in the last, 34*s.* 8*d.* Thus has the duty advanced 24*s.* per quarter, whilst the price of barley has risen only 10*s.* 9*d.*

It may be said, perhaps, that in the last year the quantity of barley malted has again increased to the extent of 400,000 quarters, which is certainly true, but which at the same time affords further proof of my inference as to the effect of duty. The fact is, the consumption has risen again in consequence of the fallen price of the barley itself, the average price of which has hardly exceeded 20*s.*, and by that reduction the same effect has of course been produced as would follow a diminution of duty to the same extent. The government has in reality stepped in and taken the farmer's crop from him, or at least all the profits of it, which have been thus completely absorbed by the duties; and this is the case with a variety of other exciseable articles.

We hear of the increased revenue of the excise, which, however, ceases to be so extraordinary, when we find that many of those articles are so reduced in price, to the loss of the grower or manufacturer, that the duty price almost alone remains. These duties have also been collected with much more exactitude and rigour within the last few years, of which, however, I by no means complain, but rather give credit to his majesty's ministers for having so done.

The distilleries of Great Britain have also always formed a very important market for the produce of the land; and here again it will be found, the effects of taxation have reduced this market likewise.

From the report of the committee of 1808, it will be seen, that the consumption of barley in Great Britain, by the distilleries at that time, amounted to near 500,000 quarters. At present, I think it will be found not to exceed 400,000; so that a further loss of that consumption must here be added to that extent, making in the whole 1,200,000 quarters. In this calculation I leave the consumption of the Irish distilleries wholly out of the question, which were stated by the same committee to have occasioned a demand of 400,000 quarters more. Our annual importation of foreign spirits, that is to say, gin and brandy, amounts to 3 or 4,000,000 of gallons. If this vast importation could be prevented, and British spirits substituted in its place, it would be equal to a further consumption of about 170,000 quarters; or to whatever extent their consumption could be reduced, we should get a proportional increased demand for our own manufacture.

It will be impossible, however, to effect such a prohibition of the foreign spirits, whilst the duties upon our own continue so high. If the home spirit was very materially cheaper than the foreign, we might secure its consumption; we might also prevent the illicit distillation from corn and molasses, which is so encouraged by the vast amount of duty, as to render all efforts to prevent it ineffectual.

During the war, the smuggling of foreign spirits has been rendered very difficult; but now it will be found almost impossible to check the practice of smuggling, if the inducement continue so strong. Should government, therefore, attempt to sustain the same amount of taxes upon British spirits which they have borne during the war, we shall soon see the manufacture destroyed, and this market for barley completely superseded by the introduction of foreign spirit, which, in point of fact, has the same effect as the importation of so many thousand quarters of corn.

It appears then, from all these considerations, indispensably necessary very materially to reduce the present duties upon malt, beer, and spirits, if we expect to give any essential relief to the agriculture of the country.

I certainly have in contemplation a reduction of duties very far indeed beyond any thing which ministers will be likely to concede; but I am sure it is unavoidably necessary, even if revenue was the sole object. How is it possible to place any reliance upon the future amount of the revenue, if agriculture should continue in its present depressed state? The land forms the chief source of the revenue, and if the value of its produce has fallen one half, as I am confident it has since the year 1812, the revenue arising from it must diminish in the same proportion.

I come now, Sir, to a consideration of the act of last session for the regulation of the corn trade. I do not think it will be necessary to examine much in detail its provisions, or its consequences; but I am under the necessity of adverting to some of its enactments, and I cannot help shortly observing upon the effects which it must have produced. Some people imagine it has afforded no advantage whatever to British agriculture; but when we know that it has taken a certain quantity of grain out of a market absolutely overloaded, it seems to be impossible to deny that it has had some beneficial consequences. If the produce of our own agriculture has been sufficient thus to depress the price, the further continuance of importation surely must have sunk it lower still.

One circumstance I am glad to find fully established by the present state of the markets, viz. that it is not at all necessary that the import price should be the minimum price of corn. The Act of last year was always falsely argued upon that assumption, in spite of the experience of seventy years to the contrary. This additional proof of the fallacy of such an opinion, I trust, will completely eradicate it. My conviction has always been, that the higher we fix the import price, and the more we encourage our own growth, the lower will be the market price upon an average of years; and the reason is obvious enough, as by securing to the British grower the possession of the home market, we stimulate his exertions, and it is from thence we can alone obtain sufficient abundance to keep down the price. I do not mean below that price which will sufficiently repay his capital and industry, for that is impossible during any long period of time; but we shall receive from him by these means a steady supply, at the cheapest rate at which it can be obtained, compared with the profit derived from capital and industry devoted to other trades and manufactures.

This opinion, however, does not rest upon theory; it is established upon the experience of a system of policy pursued by this country during many years. That system, as we all know, began in the reign of Charles 2nd, and continued down to the year 1773. The act of the 22d of Charles 2nd, placed the import price so high as virtually to amount to a prohibition of foreign corn. The bounty of *5s.* per quarter on exportation, considering the difference of the value of money between that time and the present was very great; and yet during that period the price of corn was lower than the average price of Europe. According to different accounts quoted by Charles Smith in his Tracts upon the Corn-trade, it appears that the average price of wheat during seventy-nine years, that is to say, from 1686 to 1765, was 33*s.* 2*d.*, being 4*d.* below the price of the general markets of Europe; whereas, for ninety-one years prior to the act of Charles 2nd, the price of wheat in England was very considerably above the European average. This act of Charles 2nd, and more especially the bounty act of king William, attended by the consequences which accompanied, if they did not flow from it, excited much of the attention and admiration of Europe. This might be shown, by adverting to a variety of publications of that date. I shall only notice one, which accompanied an edict of the French government in the year 1764. It is a speech addressed to the parliament of Brittany, by Monsieur De Caradeuc de la Chalotais, procureur-general, upon delivering to them that edict. In speaking of this country, and of the effect of the law giving a bounty on the exportation of corn, he says, "at the time we unfortunately forbad the exportation of corn, our neighbours encouraged and rewarded it. They (the English) in consequence tilled with emulation, their fields were covered with abundance; and in those years of want, we, who formerly used to sell them wheat, were obliged to pay them the tribute of that encouragement which they gave their fellow citizens. In three years the English received from France 10,465,000 livres. The consequences of our bad administration have been, first, that France dare not cultivate more than her own wants require, and not being able ever to elevate her views above what is barely necessary, she must infallibly often fall below, and consequently remain exposed to, all the accidents of bad seasons and short crops." Such, Sir, I am afraid is the situation of this country now. The difference between the price of corn in this country and Europe, in consequence of our taxation and various other circumstances, is generally so great, that we can rarely expect to find a foreign market for any part of it. If a bounty on the export of corn was at any time desirable, it is certainly at this time more so than ever. I am aware indeed of the strong opinions which exist against this measure, and do not say I should be sanguine of very advantageous results, even if it was adopted. At the same time I should be extremely glad in this moment of difficulty to have the trial made. It appears to me quite certain, if our present surplus produce is disposed of at a great loss, the source from whence it springs will be destroyed, and which otherwise would be available in future years. No disadvantage can be shown to have followed the constant application of a very high bounty during the period above referred to. That it did not produce a high price during that time is quite clear: the records of prices prove that to demonstration. The opponents of a bounty have, on the other hand, sometimes endeavoured to show, that the low price of the exporting period was owing to the poverty of the country at that time; but I do not believe they can have any data on which to found such an assertion. By looking to the accounts of exports and imports, and other documents of a similar nature, it appears, that the wealth and population of the country progressively advanced at that time in a ratio nearly equal to any other. If, then, the advantages attendant upon the bounty are not allowed to be attributable to it, surely it cannot be charged with having been the cause of any evil; and by teaching the farmer to extend his views of market beyond the home demand, it must, at all events, create a stimulus to his industry, and an encouragement to enterprize, always productive of advantage to the public.

There is another important object to which I am desirous of drawing the attention of the House, and that is, the means of equalizing the varying supply of succeeding years by carrying over the surplus of an abundant season to one that may be deficient. This is the wisest and best policy that can be pursued, both as respects the grower and the consumer. Wherever capital is thus employed, the best consequences follow to the public at large.

If an abundant harvest produces loss instead of advantage to the grower, what encouragement for future production?

It is rather singular, that at this moment no purchases are made even at the depressed price of the market, in reservation of future demand. No merchant will venture upon the formation of any stores for this purpose, however desirable and beneficial such an application of capital appears to be.

But, Sir, the truth is, the permission to warehouse foreign corn in this country at all times, duty free, indisputably has the effect of preventing the formation of such stores, as I can have no doubt would otherwise be created from our own produce. It is quite obvious, I think, that such must be the case. The unlimited accumulation of foreign corn necessarily prevents any considerable reservation of our own.—I say then, Sir, I should, without the least hesitation, propose the repeal of so much of the act of last session for the regulation of the corn trade, as permits the warehousing of foreign corn, at all times, duty free.

In the peculiar situation of the country, I am inclined to think it might be advisable to go further, and try the effect of measures which could not, by any means, be warranted by ordinary circumstances. In order to induce a more immediate appropriation of our present extraordinary abundance, I think it might be expedient to assist those individuals who may be disposed so to employ their capital by a loan of exchequer bills to a limited amount. The advance to each individual should not exceed the amount of half the value of the grain purchased, which should be deposited in warehouses under the king's lock. The public would thus be secured from any possible loss; and, in case of necessity, we should have a reserve of corn that might turn out essentially useful.

There are a great variety of articles, the produce of the soil, which, though very inferior in importance to corn, are yet worthy of consideration, inasmuch as they form collectively a considerable proportion of the products of agriculture, and which are very insufficiently protected against the competition of other countries, where, in consequence of taxation much below that which we are under the necessity of bearing, they can be brought to market by them at a much cheaper rate. It is, in my opinion, necessary to give to all these articles the same protection which is afforded to all other manufactures. It is by the application of capital and industry that all the produce of land is acquired, as well as in the case of all other manufactures; and to make people employ their capital on the soil, they must be put on an equal footing with those who apply their capital and labour to other manufactures. Now, if such is the policy of this country, that no one article of home manufacture fails to receive from the legislature an ample protection from foreign competition in the home market, by high duties, and is encouraged to export to foreign countries by bounties and drawbacks, why should not the same protection and encouragement be afforded to those whose properties, skill, and industry, are devoted to the cultivation of the soil? Is there any different feelings between the cultivator of the soil and any other manufacturer? Is he not actuated by the same motives? stimulated by the same desire of his own advantage? And is he not justly entitled to be put upon an equal footing? The fact, however, is, that he neither is equally protected nor encouraged; and, upon the return of peace, a quantity of articles have began to flow in upon the British markets, by which they will be speedily deluged, and the British grower ultimately destroyed. In the first place, there are a variety of seeds which this soil and climate are equally capable of producing with any countries of the continent. The first that occurs to me to mention is rape-seed, the importation of which has advanced from an average of 7000 quarters per annum during the war, to between 80 and 90,000; and it is impossible to calculate how far this quantity may be further extended. This might equally well be furnished from different parts of the united empire: 5 or 600,000 bushels of linseed have also been imported, which might as well be grown at home, and I understand British linseed is superior in quality to that which we receive from abroad. Other seeds also, such as mustard, carraway, canary, and clover seed, are also imported to a considerable extent. I have little doubt the growth of these seeds would occupy 60,000 acres of land, in a state of cultivation ready to grow wheat; so that, supposing them capable of producing three quarters per acre, their occupation by the growth of seeds would take 180,000 quarters of wheat out of the market, which at another time, if our produce should fall below our demand, would again be available for the growth of wheat. Neither is it less necessary to protect and encourage the production of our pasture lands, which evidently appear to run the same danger of being overwhelmed by the importation of similar articles from foreign countries, which all at once have flowed in upon us since the peace. For instance, tallow, cheese, butter; of the two latter articles, nearly 300,000cwt. have been imported in the last year, which amount nearly to the growth of 250,000 acres. The supply of these articles is of vast importance to Ireland, the distress of which country, I believe, if possible, exceeds that of any part of Great Britain. The importation of tallow has, all at once, risen also from about 16,000 tons in the year 1813, to about 28,000 in the year 1815. There is also another most important article, the import of which has suddenly increased to an extent proportionably greater even than those which I have just mentioned; that article is wool. The amount imported rose, all at once, from 7,000,000*l.* to upwards of 15,000,000*l.* It is indeed but a very few years ago, that the average import did not exceed three or four. I know that the expediency of a considerable duty upon the import of wool will be much disputed; and indeed there may be variety of opinion as to the policy of very high duties upon the other articles just mentioned. I shall not now enter into any particular examination of the arguments that may be urged by different persons interested in their growth or in their consumption; I will only observe, that the same reasons exist in each case for protection to the home producer. It is impossible we can contend in the market, in the production of those commodities, with countries where taxation has not run to the extent which it has in this. Our own produce must therefore be annihilated, if it is not, by means of heavy duties, placed at least upon an equal footing with that of other countries. It cannot be wise to destroy any part of the produce of our own soil; if the manufacturer requires to have wool, rape-seed oil, or any other article, will he not eventually be injured by the ruin of our own growth, which must in great part furnish his demand? Will he not likewise, in proportion as he injures and diminishes the produce of British agriculture, proportionably diminish the extent of the home market for the sale of his manufactured goods? These arguments apply to all situations, and all times but much more forcibly to the present, in as much as the return of peace has brought such a redundancy of each suddenly into the British market, which certainly has not been called for by any proportionate increased demand. Each of these articles are at present subject to duties on importation, with drawback on export; but times have rendered those duties totally nugatory, and yet the protection they formerly gave is more necessary than ever. In short, Sir, every effort must be used which prudent policy can suggest, to give to our agriculture every advantage possible. I have suggested nothing which practice and experience do not fully warrant. Except the proposed assistance of government by the loan of Exchequer bills, there is no one expedient, which is not strictly conformable to the long established policy of this country; there is none of which we have not had full experience by the constant practice of the last hundred years; there is none which is not equally applicable to the situation of this country, even if they were not called for by the unexampled distress in which we find ourselves involved. That they would be effectual, I cannot pretend to assert; but of this I am convinced, that it is not one or two trifling half measures that can be of any avail; every wheel must be put in motion together, to give us any chance of accomplishing our object.

Before I sit down, I must again advert to what I consider the first, the most practicable and efficient means of speedy relief, and which must consist in a very large reduction of taxation, particularly of the several duties upon barley. I have before said, that I am perfectly aware, that ministers are by no means prepared to accede to such a reduction of taxes as would be necessary to produce any essential benefit. I know that it would derange, and indeed totally alter their whole system of finance for the year; but I would intreat them to consider, how it can be possible to realize that revenue of which they have formed an expectation, if the agriculture of the country should continue in its present impoverished condition. The land at present actually pays no rent at all; the value of the produce of arable land does not even cover the charges upon it, independent of any rent whatever; thousands and thousands of acres are already wholly untenanted, and fast returning into a state of absolute sterility. Is not the land the chief source of our revenue? If we measure it by the property tax, we find that the land yields eight-elevenths of all the productive sources of revenue; of 14,000,000 raised by the property tax, very nearly eight arise from the landlord and tenant; about three from trades and manufactures, and three from funds and offices. These latter cannot be considered as sources of productive revenue, as they in fact arise out of the former. How can we then expect revenue under such circumstances? If we advert again to the estimate I have before made, of the value of the growth or produce of land, which, I suppose in 1812, to be 200,000,000, and which is now reduced in value to one half, viz. to 100,000,000; and if we take the aggregate amount of taxation to be 30 per cent. thereon, which is, in all probability, as little as it can be, we find a loss at once of 30,000,000 per annum. If the diminution of value is only one-third, instead of a half, the loss of revenue will be 20,000,000.

Let us make the estimate in another way. Take the number of quarters of all sorts of grain grown in the united empire at 40,000,000 of quarters, which it is generally allowed to be; suppose 10,000,000 quarters of wheat fallen 40*s.* per quarter, barley 10,000,000, 20*s.* per quarter, oats, peas, and beans, the remainder, also 20*s.* per quarter, allow only 15,000,000*l.* for all other produce of the land, and at this calculation we find a reduction of 70,000,000, which, at 30 per cent. shows a loss to the revenue of 21,000,000*l.*

I do not see that there can be any fallacy in this statement, and it exhibits a most alarming prospect; and yet his majesty's ministers seem to be absolutely blind to the danger, quite ignorant of, and unprovided against it. They are going on with their plans of finance just as if the country was in the most flourishing condition; have determined upon the appropriation of every shilling of the sinking fund to the liquidation of the national debt; and determined to force up the funds by some means or other. They assume that the rise of the funds will be beneficial to the land owners and occupiers, and so, no doubt, it would, if they were rising in consequence of the rising prosperity of the country, but not if they are lifted (the possibility of which, by-the-bye, I much doubt) by draining to the very dregs the property of all other classes of the community. I readily admit the full advantage of the sinking fund, if the means of supplying it can be extracted from the country without diminishing its productive powers. I admit also, that its full efficacy is to be felt in a time of peace, when the resources of the country may exceed its expenditure. Ministers, I suppose, have sanguinely formed to themselves an opinion, that this prosperous state of things has now arrived. They would, no doubt, rejoice if such was the reality. So far from being right, however, in this expectation, I am quite convinced there never was a moment when such hopes were so little likely to be realized. It soon will be found, if it is not already felt, that we are in a situation of financial difficulty quite unparalleled. Instead of indulging such fallacious hopes as ministers seem to have formed, they should have devoted their first thoughts to rescue the country from the unparalleled distress into which it has fallen, as also to the utmost possible alleviation of the people from the weight of taxation under which they labour. In order to do this, I am aware we must avail ourselves of the sinking fund to a very large amount. I have already said, that I am fully sensible of the advantage of a sinking fund under circumstances different from those in which we are now placed. But I am confident the maintenance of the sinking fund now, to the extent proposed, will hurry the country into absolute ruin. It will be a sinking fund which will plunge us still further into difficulties inextricable. In the application of a sinking fund, I see no difference between the situation of an individual and that of the country at large. Suppose a manufacturer or farmer working upon a borrowed capital; there can be no doubt that it is desirable, as his property increases, he should establish a fund for the gradual diminution of his debts; and we will suppose him for that purpose to lay aside a specific sum annually. If, however, that sum, producing 5 per cent. annually, would produce 30 applied to his manufacture, he would be a loser of 25 per cent. upon the sum applied to his sinking fund. The case, however, would be stronger a thousand fold, if, in order to sustain his sinking fund, the manufacturer should rob his steam-engine of its fuel, or if the farmer should for the same purpose starve his horses and impoverish his land. However strong this comparison may appear, I contend that we are identically doing the same thing, if in order to maintain our sinking fund in this moment of unprecedented embarrassment, we exhaust the sinews of our strength, by exacting that excessive amount of taxation which it is proposed to drain from the exhausted pockets of the people. If we persist in so doing, I am persuaded we shall rapidly diminish the productive sources of the country, and drive the people into a state of distress little short of despair.

I say, then, instead of priding ourselves upon leaving untouched a sinking fund of 14,000,000*l.* per annum, instead of flattering ourselves with the expectation of being able thus to sustain the prices of stocks, we should bend our whole thoughts to the immediate relief of the country from the taxation which overwhelms it, and we should adopt every other possible means to restore the former prosperity of our agriculture, which has recently undergone so fatal a change, and which must occasion in its fall the same distress to all other classes of the community.

If the House should agree to go into a committee, I shall take the liberty of proposing certain resolutions as the basis of several different measures applicable to the relief of the agriculture of the country; and which I think ought to be adopted without delay. I do not pretend to assert that they would be adequate to the necessity of the case; but I think they could not fail of affording very considerable relief.

I repeat my conviction, that no danger can arise from their adoption; that they are founded upon the known and established policy of the country, and as such are obviously the first means to be tried, before we are compelled to have recourse to any others of a different nature.

I would now, sir, take the liberty of reading to the House the Resolutions which I have drawn up; and which I have done as concisely as possible.

1. " That the portion of the community, whose capitals are engaged in agriculture, as well as those numerous classes whose employment depends thereon, are at present suffering under the pressure of unexampled distress.

2. " That the continuance of such distress is fraught with extreme danger to the most important interests of the country.

3. " That the demand for the extended produce of our agriculture is, at this time, insufficient to produce that price, which is necessary to cover the heavy charges and burthens upon it.

4. " That the demand for barley has been very materially reduced, by the excessive duties to which it is subjected in the course of the various operations which adapt it to the use of the consumer.

5. " That the continuance of those duties, during peace, when the facility of smuggling is so much increased, cannot fail to injure the home manufacture of spirits, which must still farther diminish the demand for barley.

6 " That it his therefore necessary to reduce the duties on malt, beer, and spirits.

7 " That in order to equalize the supply of grain and promote its cultivation, it is desirable that an appropriation should be made from the extra produce of abundant harvests, to supply the deficiency of seasons less favourable.

8 " That the admission of foreign corn to be warehoused, prevents such application of our own occasional abundance, and assigns to foreign agriculture the formation of those stores, which might otherwise be created from the produce of our own.

9. " That it is therefore expedient to repeal so much of an act of last session for the regulation of the corn trade, as permits the warehousing of foreign corn, at all times, duty free.

10. " That in order further to promote the appropriation of a part of our present abundance, and reserve it for future consumption, it is expedient to aid the means of those individuals who may be disposed so to employ their capitals, by an advance of exchequer bills, to a limited amount.

11 " That excessive taxation renders it necessary to give protection to all articles, the produce of our own soil, against similar articles, the growth of foreign countries, not subject to the same burthens, and, in conformity with that policy which has been uniformly observed, of protecting by duties and encouraging by bounties or drawbacks, all our other manufactures.

12. " That it is therefore expedient to impose additional duties and restrictions on the importation of all articles, the produce of foreign agriculture.

13 " That it is expedient, under due limitation, to encourage, by bounty or drawback, the exportation of the redundant produce of the agriculture of the united kingdom.

14. " That the tithe and the poor-rates to the payment of which those whose capitals are engaged in agriculture are almost exclusively subjected, have recently been felt to press with increasing and unexampled severity, and that it is therefore necessary to relieve them, as far as possible from the operation of other burthens."

The resolutions having been read, Mr. Western moved, " That this House will resolve itself into a committee of the whole House to consider of the distressed state of the Agriculture of the United Kingdom."

Mr. *Frankland Lewis* rose to second the motion of his hon. friend. If, he said, there ever was a time which called for a deliberate review of the circumstances in which we stood, it was surely the present. We had been for twenty-four years engaged in a struggle which had confined all our attentions to one object, wisely so perhaps, for the legitimate object of war was victory; but when it was considered, that the condition of all human action was to foresee but a part only of the results of any system of exertion, and that however wisely it might be calculated to answer its immediate end, yet that applied as it must be to ever-varying circumstances, some unlooked-for combinations would arise, and some effects be produced, which were not calculated on, it must be the duty of those who control the powers of the state, to pause from time to time, to consider and examine. In the war which we had now terminated, as he trusted in a firm and lasting peace, the country had displayed resources and powers beyond what the most sanguine man had thought possible; but in so doing, it was now our duty to inquire, had nothing occurred to derange our system, or impair our strength? If it should appear there had, it was our duty to examine and weigh the nature of the danger; not to sit wrapt in the contemplation of our glory and our victories. Down to a late period of the war, there was no symptom of derangement or exhaustion. In 1812 all was still, improving, and prosperous: since that period, a change had taken place; on which, after the clear and eloquent statements of his hon. friend, he would not enlarge; but it could not be denied that a fall in the prices of the produce of land had involved the country in extreme difficulties. How, then, and why was this? There were some who solved the problem in a summary way, who imputed all our sufferings to a peace, and who prescribed war as the only remedy for our distress. If the present discussion did nothing more than dispel this dangerous illusion, he should be content, as a conviction of the benefits resulting from peace was a better guarantee for its continuance, than treaties. It was to the continuance of peace alone, that we could look for relief from our present afflictions. That there was nothing in peace which had a tendency to produce a fall in the price of grain was clear from what took place after the peace of 1763, and again 1783; and it would be seen in the Eton College Table, that in the three years succeeding each of those periods, grain did not fall. This he thought was perfectly decisive on the general point. He did not, however, go so far as to say that the immediate change from war to peace had no effect: undoubtedly it had. When the industry of a country was settled to any one system, a change, be it what it might, produced suffering. Those who in war were employed in the manufacturing all the apparatus of war, on the return of peace were, for a time, thrown out of employ; but this was distress produced by change, and was not inherent in the nature of a state of peace. A change from peace to war would produce it in a greater degree. In like manner he would not say that the withdrawing government from the market had not, in some degree, contributed to aid the fall in prices—doubtless it had done; but then it must be remembered for how small a part of the population they purchased the supplies—for navy and the prisoners of war only; for the army was hardly at all reduced. It was, he thought, by a very different view of the war and its effect, that we should arrive at any thing like a true view of the present state of the country. That war had been successful and glorious beyond all others; but it was equally undeniable, that beyond all others it had been expensive. It had left us 40 millions a year to pay as interest of debt, and had left us also what we were told was necessary, an establishment which at the least would cost 20 millions more. Now he would ask the House to consider fairly what was the real nature and effect of this state of things. Could the system of borrowing, to which we had resorted with so little reserve, be carried on to any extent? or if, like every thing human, it had limits, where were they to be found? With the permission of the House, he would endeavour to state his reasons for thinking we had come more nearly to the point beyond which that system could not be extended, than the House or the country were aware of. He threw himself upon the indulgence of the House; for he could not hope to make himself understood without stating what he feared they would consider as abstract propositions. The whole amount of all the produce of the country was, in the first instance, the result of all the industry of the country; from this total produce, then, there must always be taken a sufficient share to reward and maintain the industry which produces it, and it was obvious that share cannot be reduced without impairing and diminishing the industry, and consequently the produce or wealth of the country. Over and above the share which must be set apart to maintain the industry of the country, there remains a surplus, which may be divided into two parts, namely, rent of land and profits of capital stock; and it is from these two funds only, that all revenue, however distributed, arises. Now, the utmost limit to which it was possible to imagine that taxation and the transfer of property to the stockholder could be pressed, is as far as to absorb the whole of these two funds; but there are reasons why it never could be pressed quite so far as this, without destroying the industry of the country, as much as if it absorbed the portion destined to maintain the industry itself. Out of that portion which falls to the landlord as rent, he has to maintain buildings, make drains, fences, &c., and perform all the most expensive part of keeping up the farms, without which the cultivation of them could not continue to be carried on; and it was clear, therefore, that the lowest state to which the land-owner can with safety be reduced, is that of being steward of the land; a sufficient share of the rent to enable him to discharge that duty must always be left him. This, as far as it regards the produce of land, which is the subject under immediate consideration, is the utmost limit to which the transfer of the revenue arising from land into the hands of the state could possibly be extended: and the hon. gentleman said, he would state the grounds on which it appeared to him that we had already reached much nearer to that point, and beyond which borrowing and funding cannot be pressed, than we were aware of. He assumed, that the property tax returns afforded the best means of fixing the amount of the annual produce of the labour of the people. By these it appeared that the whole of this annual produce amounted to 130 millions. If, then, the whole amount of the taxation of the country was 65 millions, and the whole amount of its annual produce was 130 millions, it followed that one half of the amount of the produce of the land was transferred to the service of the state. This was the case in the year 1812. But what had happened since then? The value of the produce of land had fallen one-third or one-fourth—he would take it even at one-fourth. In our present situation, then, about two-thirds of the whole amount of the annual produce was transferred to the public service. Further than this, he maintained it was impossible to carry the proportion of produce which could be spared for the service of the state. It was a vulgar saying, that "every thing found its level;" but it was not applicable in the present situation of the country. The proposition on which this adage rested was, that the price of labour was ultimately fixed by the price of corn. But it was worth while to see how far this would operate in the present situation of the country. If in 1812 one half of the amount of the produce of the country went to government, and if now, while at peace, two-thirds of this produce was so applied—if by some fatality we should be engaged in a new war, it required no prophet's eye to see that there would be an end to the landholders of England — [Hear, hear!]. Last night a right hon. gentleman had very eloquently described the evils which Ireland was suffering for want of a resident gentry. A resident gentry was one of the chief blessings which England enjoyed, and if the country lost this, it would lose what nothing else could compensate. This was always to be considered. It must never be lost sight of, that there was no danger to which our country could be exposed equal to the want of a resident gentry. We might hear complaints of the want of colonies—we might hear that colonies were in danger from the attacks of Caffres and Bosjesmen, or from a king of Candy; but the love of his country was so strong in him, that if the question was to be about the destruction of a parish in Lincolnshire or Somersetshire, he would not put it in competition with all the colonies of the empire—[Hear, hear!] The fact was, that there were now parishes in Cambridgeshire and other counties of England, which, not to speak with exaggeration, were in a more desolate state than the wildest tracts of the most uncultivated of our colonies. There was one cause of the present distress, which, if the House looked for any chance of security to the country, must not be disregarded; namely, the depreciation of our currency. It was since the want of any standard for the currency, that all the distresses of the country had arisen. He did not mean to say that this was the principal cause of the present depression, but it certainly was a great aggravation.

The consequences of the want of any standard for the currency had been, that vast advances of capital had been made by country bankers, in the shape of stamped pieces of paper. As long as the country was otherwise in a prosperous state, no material inconvenience had been found to result from this. But when distress was caused by over-trading and over-produce, this means of facilitating the first of these misfortunes produced the most ruinous consequences. The only mode which the country bankers had of putting their notes into circulation was by giving them to farmers and dealers; but as soon as they began to be alarmed, they immediately called them in again. This was a dreadful aggravation of their distress. The right hon. the chancellor of the exchequer had said that if fifteen millions of money were distributed among the country banks, the distresses of farmers would be relieved. He thought differently; he did not think that if fifty millions were distributed among the country bankers, they would advance any thing to farmers, because their credit was entirely gone. The want of money which the farmers suffered, was not owing to want of power in the bankers to make advances, but to want of inclination. The system of finance proposed for the present year was on this principle, that the funds should be kept at a high price, so as that capitalists might not be tempted to withdraw their money for the purpose of employing it in farming. But the fact was, that there was no disposition now to employ capital in so unprofitable a way. With a view to affording relief, it would therefore be necessary in the first place, to restore a standard of currency. He did not mean that the old standard should be restored, but that some standard should be established. Relief in taxation was also to be afforded, especially in the malt tax, which, by being removed, would afford a market for barley. He was convinced that the operation of these duties would be found to be of a two-fold nature: first, as they affected the grower in his character of consumer; and, secondly, as they applied to the general market for barley. The duty imposed in the year 1803, of two shillings on the bushel, had been attended with the effect of reducing the number of bushels malted from thirty to twenty-two millions. Nothing could be more evident, from the accounts of the revenue, than that the consumption of this article was regulated by the duty, and that the diminution of the duty might be fully compensated by the increased consumption. The instance to which he had alluded, showed that in one year a market for eight millions of bushels of barley had been closed. There were other defects in our system of political economy that required revisal. A diminution of the duty on wool was necessary, as well as the removal of all those absurd restrictions on the exportation and conveyance of this most important article. It had been the main position of our policy last year, on the question of the corn laws, to make the country independent of foreign supply. But this principle seemed to be abandoned, and the contrary to be adopted. He reproved the prohibition on the growth of tobacco, which had been enacted in order to encourage colonies which were no longer our own. Why then should it be allowed to remain? It might then produce advantages to the country from the carrying trade. But those had ceased also. Tobacco grew in Holland and Sweden: there was therefore no natural prohibition against its growth here, and he thought it would be the duty of the House to consider whether it would not be proper to repeal the legal prohibition.—He then adverted to the poor laws, which he thought calculated to increase the evils they were intended to remedy. They were no longer administered in the spirit in which they had been enacted. He should propose some amendment to bring them round to their original ends, and to render them less oppressive. The tendency of that amendment would be to define more accurately the persons who should be objects of relief, than the laws now did. He should consider proper objects for relief, the decrepid, the old, and the helpless, but should reject those reduced by their own imprudence or wickedness. He should also propose to fix some point at which the operation of the law should cease, that the whole rent of the landlord should not be swallowed up. Without such alterations, the increasing amount of the poors-rates would finish by over-running the whole country. The hon. gentleman then argued that the subject was collectively too large to be confined to a committee up stairs. It might be desirable that some parts of it, such as the questions respecting wool, tobacco, and others of that nature, should be referred to such committees, in order to facilitate the whole investigation; but the main question itself could only be properly discussed in a committee of the whole House.

Mr. *Robinson* complimented the hon. mover and seconder, on the temperate and lucid manner in which they had submitted the merits of this important measure to the consideration of the House, and expressed his entire concurrence with the proposition for referring the subject to a committee. But he hoped that this reference would not lead sanguine minds to calculate upon results beyond the power of parliament to effect. That parliament had the disposition to give the most attentive consideration to the distresses of the country, and to apply every practicable remedy, there could not be the slightest doubt. He was satisfied that no doubt existed in any quarter as to that disposition, and that the public would look to the decision of parliament with every possible deference. Whatever, indeed, might be sometimes said, he was persuaded that the people of England regarded with the utmost respect the decision of parliament, and that even if no relief were afforded on that occasion, the proceedings of the House would produce great satisfaction, especially from the solicitude which those proceedings would manifest to consult that most important object, the interest of the agriculture of the country. Upon this subject he felt a personal interest from the part which he took last session with regard to the corn laws; and from what had since occurred respecting that much calumniated and misunderstood measure, he believed there was no individual who had then manifested any resentment who was not ready to ask pardon of those who were the objects of that resentment. The popular delusion of that day had indeed become obvious to the whole of the country: for the measure to which that delusion referred had occasioned none of the mischief which was then apprehended, while, he was sorry to say, it was not productive of the good expected from its adoption. It had not the power of preventing the distress against which it was pointed. But yet, if that measure had been adopted at an earlier period, he was convinced that the distress would at least have been more gradual—that the pressure of it would not have been so immediately and so severely felt. He had, however, the satisfaction of thinking, that if the measure alluded to had done no good, it had done no harm, and therefore the popular cry of the last year had been proved to be utterly groundless. The right hon. gentleman concluded with observing, that he had the utmost satisfaction in concurring with the motion, and that he should use every effort in his power to promote the object it aimed at.

Sir *Frederick Flood* emphatically pressed upon the consideration of the House the severe distress of the people of Ireland, which was so notorious, that he could not think it necessary to describe it. The hon. baronet, however, thought it proper to state the cause and the effect, with the remedy for that distress. The main cause was, he contended, the non-residence of the land-owners, which evil had increased to an alarming extent since the year 1801. The principal part of such land-owners had, indeed, absented themselves of late from that country, leaving the lower orders to the government of mercyless agents. This was, in fact, the radical cause of Ireland's misfortunes, and unless it was in some degree remedied, it was vain to look for happiness in that part of the empire. Another cause of the misfortune of Ireland was, the amount of its taxation. The assessed taxes and the tithes bore upon the Irish with peculiar severity, while they were subject to another grinding tax, from which England was entirely exempt, namely, the hearth tax. From the operation of those causes, four-fifths of the Irish people were discontented. And could this discontent create any surprise? For what was their actual condition? The landlord could not collect his rent, the tenants could not pay their rents, and the labourers could not obtain any employment. What then was to become of those labourers? Why, in a country where there were no poor-rates, those poor people must starve, and starvation was of late the fate of many. Parliament might send an army of 25,000 men to a country so situated, and such a force might be requisite to collect the taxes. An army might be also necessary in certain disturbed districts, for there were, no doubt, some alarming commotions in part of the country—in a county or two, for instance. But he could affirm that, with the exception of those districts, Ireland was quite as tranquil as this country; and in justice to the government, to which he owed no obligation, he could bear testimony, that every practicable endeavour was used to preserve that tranquillity. Ireland was indeed much indebted to the conduct of lord Whitworth, and to that of the right hon. gentleman opposite (Mr. Peel), who had brought forward measures eminently calculated to prevent the contagion of riot from spreading. The riotous spirit was, in fact, comparatively very limited, and this ought to be generally known; for the character of a country was of the utmost value, and a whole nation should not be slandered for the misconduct of a few, especially in England, for such slander was calculated to prevent the English from visiting Ireland, where they were always hospitably received, where their residence was uniformly desirable, because it never failed to be advantageous to the country. There might be ribbon men or other disturbers in particular counties, but such persons were not known in the country at large. In the west, the east, and the south of Ireland, for instance, such a person as a ribbon man was not to be found. Therefore an indiscriminating imputation should not be cast upon Ireland. The people of that country had, indeed, already suffered too much from such imputations. How often, for instance, were the Catholics at large implicated in crimes which properly applied only to a few of that body, and that too from the representation of persons affecting to be historians, and judging of a great body of meritorious men from what happened to come under their own immediate observation. But such writers had since recanted their errors in consequence of further information. The Catholic body was now completely vindicated, because its character and loyalty was fully known, and wherever the general character of Ireland was known it would not be subject to censure. The hon. baronet earnestly recommended the House to examine the state of that country, and to look to other remedies than that which a military force was capable of affording, to remove the grievances of the people, to accede to their just claims, and to begin the work of redress by repealing the duty upon malt, with a view to encourage the cultivation of barley, and to impose a protecting duty upon the importation of foreign butter into this country, with a view to encourage the Irish trade in that article. He concluded with stating his disposition to look alike to the fair claims of every portion of the united kingdom, but impressing the peculiar necessity of attending to the state of Ireland, from the very severely distressed condition of its inhabitants. It was the duty of the House to assist Ireland: she was the strength of this country. "We are two sisters," said the hon. baronet; "you the elder and we the younger, and both ought to go hand in hand together."

Mr. *Baring* said, that he should take another opportunity of stating his opinion upon the character and tendency of the measures proposed by the hon. mover, but from an observation of that hon. gentleman, he thought it proper at once to mention that the opinion which he expressed last session, with regard to the policy of the corn laws, had undergone no change whatever. He was as anxious as any man to afford every possible relief to the distress which so notoriously existed among the agricultural classes, but he was much afraid, that any relief in the power of parliament to devise would prove extremely inadequate. However, he felt it the duty of the House to inquire, and patiently to listen to any statement that might be brought forward upon this important subject, with a view to see whether any thing could be done by legislative interference. The country was placed in an artificial state, and parliament should grant every relief of which such state might be found susceptible. At the same time he must take this opportunity of saying that the legislative act of last session had done nothing for the country. That act was indeed completely a dead letter, for the country was just in the state in which it would have been if it had never passed; therefore such an act should not have been passed, especially against the voice of the public; for it had afforded no relief to the distress of the farmers, while it outraged the feelings of all other classes of the community.

Mr. *Huskisson* animadverted upon the absence of the majority of the gentlemen on the other side from the consideration of this interesting subject; but the hon. mover, whom he ventured to call his hon. friend had probably proceeded in a tone of moderation which did not suit the taste of those gentlemen. He said, that his feelings were fully alive to that distress which the hon. mover had described; and in the committee he would give every attention to the subject. It was a matter of the greatest importance to the country, and of the most complicated nature; it embraced a variety of topics connected with political economy, and deserved the most serious consideration of the House.

He hoped the inquiry would be pursued with the utmost attention and patience; but he feared that the public expectation far exceeded what the power of parliament could effect. He would suggest, however, whether it would not be desirable to print the resolutions for the consideration of the committee, and that they should be circulated among the members of that House. To some of those resolutions he had a decided objection, but he should reserve the declaration of his opinion for a more convenient opportunity.

Mr. *Gooch* expressed the utmost satisfaction at the candid and able manner in which this subject had been brought under the consideration of the House. The speeches of the hon. mover and seconder were indeed completely free from party feeling, and had nothing in view but the good of the country. Such speeches were, therefore, peculiarly calculated to secure that unanimity which prevailed, and which ought not to be interrupted by any such observations as those which he had heard with pain from the last speaker. On such an occasion where the interest of the country was so much at stake nothing ought to be said that had a tendency to provoke party animosities.

Lord *Castlereagh* joined in the commendations which had justly been passed on the conduct of the gentleman opposite. The House were deeply obliged to the hon. member, not only for the ability with which he had opened this question, but for the spirit of moderation in which he had done it. He had never heard a speech discussing an important subject delivered with a tone better calculated to conciliate all parties. It was in itself a subject full of difficulty, and one which he had not been confident enough in himself to bring before the House. He had hitherto trusted to time, but he should owe it to that hon. gentleman if he did now think the time of relief at no great distance. The hon. member had laid down practical remedies, and he should be happy to co-operate with him in the most patient investigation of the case, and to concur in procuring the most effectual relief. He apprehended the course the hon. gentleman ought now to pursue, would be to move for the committee, and in the meanwhile to have his resolutions printed.

Mr. Hart Davis and Mr. Hall, made a few observations; but in so low a tone, that they could not be heard in the gallery.

Colonel *Wood* said, that if the House had not been so exhausted, he should have thought it his duty to bring forward the state of the principality of Wales. Another opportunity however, would occur; and therefore he should merely observe, that the principality, was materially interested in the two questions of malt and agricultural horses, and had suffered very considerably from those taxes.

Mr. *Lockhart* only rose to say, that he hoped, on this occasion, the public would feel that the whole interests of society had been embraced. He was extremely sorry to hear an hon. member state, that the power of parliament could not relieve the distresses of the country. He desired to enter his protest against this doctrine, and to declare, that it was the duty of the House to relieve the people from those severe distresses which had not been inflicted by Providence but had arisen out of the positive laws and institutions of the country.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* concurred in thinking, that the resolutions ought to be printed, and expressed his opinion, that they were not the worse for not containing much argumentative matter.

The *Speaker* said, that it was better to abstain from all argument, and to frame the resolutions in the plainest manner.

Mr. *Western* expressed his gratitude for the manner in which his proposition had been received, and moved that the House resolve itself into a committee of the whole House to take the subject into consideration

The question was put, and unanimously agreed to, and a committee was fixed for Tuesday the 19th instant. The resolutions were ordered to be printed.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Friday, March 8.

Proxies.] Lord *Holland* adverted to a question which was started at the commencement of the session, with regard to the right of peers having been advanced in the peerage, to sign proxies by their former titles, and observed, that though no actual question might be raised upon it during the session, yet it was better to decide the point at once, than to leave it open to dispute at a moment when the proxies might be called into use. He therefore moved, that it be referred to the committee of privileges, to search for precedents upon this point, and report to the House, and that the committee do meet on Thursday next.—Ordered.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, March 8.

This day, pursuant to order, the House was called over.

PETITION OF RICHARD GATHORNE BUTT.] A petition of Richard Gathorne Butt, late a prisoner in the King's Bench was presented and read; setting forth,

"That the petitioner was, on the 21st June 1814, under an alleged conspiracy against the Stock Exchange, sentenced by his majesty's court of King's Bench to stand in the pillory, one year's imprisonment, and a fine of 1,000*l.*; that the period of the petitioner's imprisonment terminated at twelve o'clock of the night of the 19th of June, 1815; but conformably to the regulations of the prison he could not be released until eight o'clock of the morning following, the gates remaining shut until that hour, at which time he expected some communication on the subject, and had accordingly provided himself with the amount of his fine ready to pay it into the hands of the marshal, or any other person legally authorized to receive it; and the petitioner further most humbly sheweth, that, in such expectation, he waited with increasing anxiety until half past ten o'clock, when Mr. Broochooft, clerk of Mr. Jones, the marshal, knocked at his door, and, on seeing the petitioner, exclaimed, "Sir, I thought you were gone, as the gates have been open to you since eight o'clock;" the petitioner observed it was very extraordinary that a circumstance of so much importance had not been made known to him at the moment of its occurrence; Mr. Broochooft repeated his belief that the petitioner had left the prison, and added, that the petitioner's fine might be given to him, or the marshal, or to the master of the crown office; and the petitioner further most humbly sheweth, that afterwards, between the hours of eleven and twelve o'clock, he sent to the gates to learn if he might pass to lord Cochrane's apartments, and, receiving an answer that there could be no possible objection, he proceeded thither, and thence to the outside of the prison, interrogating the different keepers as he passed them if they had any demands on him, and was answered in the negative by the whole, with the exception of Filewood the turnkey, who stated that the petitioner had not paid the gaol fees, and mentioned 1*l.* 14*s.*, the amount of the corpse fee, a sum exacted for every dead body passing the gates of the prison, but said that he did not mean to detain him on that account; the petitioner then desired the turnkeys (Filewood and Kent) to enter his address in the lobby-books, that the place of his future abode might be known; and, it having been entered accordingly, he departed, impressed with the fullest and most perfect conviction, from the conduct of the marshal and his officers, as above submitted, that his fine had been remitted; and the petitioner further most humbly sheweth, that, on his restoration to liberty, his various concerns, so long neglected, demanded his personal attendance in different quarters of both the town and country; that, on one of those occasions, during his absence, and at a late hour of the night, two men called at his house, and inquired for him; they were told he was from home, but, not satisfied with such information, they seized the candle from the hand of the servant who had opened the door to them, rushed up stairs, and examined the different apartments, where they remained as long as they thought proper; and the petitioner further most humbly sheweth, that, on the subsequent evening, a larger party beset his house, he being then also absent; and, having learnt that the persons composing it were belonging to the marshal, he lost no time in addressing that officer, to inform him that the petitioner's solicitor had been instructed to confer with him on any business he might have with him, but to such the petitioner's address no answer was given, nor, to his knowledge, any manner of notice taken of it; and the petitioner further most humbly sheweth, that, on the 29th day of the month of June aforesaid, and nine days after his enlargement from the prison of the King's Bench, he was, near the house of lord Harewood, leading into Hanover Square, accosted by two men, Thomas Gibbons and William Poole, who said their business was to arrest him, that their office was their authority for the act, and which they were ordered by Mr. Jones the marshal to perform; and, although frequently required by the petitioner to produce to him some further and other authority, by which they could justify the seizure of his person, they positively refused so to do, constantly repeating, by way of answer to his demands, that they were ordered by Mr. Jones the marshal to do what they had done, and that their office was their authority; and the petitioner further most humbly sheweth, that, having been arrested by the said Thomas Gibbons and William Poole, he was by them dragged to an hackney coach, and forced into it, and in that manner carried to the King's Bench prison, and there locked up in a small room; that, in such his confinement, Mr. Broochooft, above mentioned, repeatedly called on him, and intreated that he would pay his fine of 1,000*l.*; that the petitioner refused so to do, and remonstrated with him on the illegality of the means resorted to for the purpose of once more bringing him within the walls of that prison; that, finding the petitioner determined in his refusal, he was in the evening conducted to the interior of the prison, and must there have passed the night on the bare boards, as no accommodation had been provided for him, if one of the prisoners had not given him his bed; and the petitioner further most humbly sheweth, that he continued under such duress imprisoned in the prison of the King's Bench eight days, and, in order to be released therefrom, was at last compelled to pay the afore-mentioned sum of 1,000*l.*, which he possessed, was ready to pay, and which he offered to pay, on the expiration of the term of his imprisonment, as before submitted to the House, but which there was not then any one to receive, although he of his own accord continued within the walls of the prison several hours after such term of confinement had expired, that he might pay such fine into the hands of some person duly authorized to receive it, and to give him the necessary release on account thereof, and did then, as aforesaid, depart from the said prison in the most public manner, and in the conviction that his fine had been remitted; and the petitioner humbly conceives that such forcible arrest and imprisonment was and is a violation of the statutes of these realms and of the liberty of the subject; and the petitioner further most humbly sheweth, that he was constrained to pay the said fine of 1,000*l.* owing to despair, and to the apprehension of continuing for ever in confinement, if he refused any longer so to do, the petitioner having immediately made an application, founded on an affidavit, to sir Simon Le Blanc, one of the judges of the court of King's Bench, for an Habeas Corpus, as he had been advised that he was entitled thereto under an act of parliament made in the time of king Charles the second; and that learned judge having thought fit to refuse the granting thereof, the petitioner conceived that he had no alternative; and the petitioner further most humbly sheweth, that such the actings and doings of the said Mr. Jones, the marshal of the King's Bench prison, and of the said Thomas Gibbons and William Poole, as aforesaid, were and are illegal, unjust, arbitrary, and oppressive; and that, in obtaining from the petitioner the said sum of 1,000*l.* by means of such actings and doings, was and is in itself an act of extortion, contrary to the laws of these realms, and in violation of the most sacred rights of the subject; the petitioner therefore most humbly prays, that the House may be pleased to take the premises into their consideration, and direct such measures and proceedings against the said Mr. Jones, the marshal of the King's Bench prison, and against the said Thomas Gibbons and William Poole, as in the wisdom of the House shall seem fit, and as such their actings and doings as aforesaid shall appear to require, in aid of the laws, and for the protection of the subject of these realms; and that the House may be further pleased to grant to the petitioner such other relief as his sufferings as aforesaid shall, in the wisdom and justice of the House, be entitled to."

Ordered to lie upon the table.

PETITIONS AGAINST THE PROPERTY TAX.] Petitions against the property tax were presented, from the noblemen and gentlemen connected with the different counties in Scotland, the incorporation of hammermen and of goldsmiths of Edinburgh, the inhabitants of St. George, Middlesex, the inhabitants of Twickenham and Kensington, the gentry, clergy, and yeomanry of Market Lavington, the inhabitants of Newbury, the occupiers and owners of lands in various parts of England, the inhabitants of Wigan, Abingdon, Maidenhead, St. Neot's, Batley, Welton cum Melton, Aldborough, St. John of Wapping, Warwick, Ashburton, Dewsbury, and Devizes.

Sir *Charles Mordaunt*, on presenting the petition from the freeholders and inhabitants of the county of Warwick, observed, that the prayer of the petition was not only against the property tax, but also for the reduction of the proposed military establishment, and for the abolition of sinecure places and pensions. As he had not been able to attend in his place during the discussion of the army estimates on the motion for going into the committee, he wished to take the present opportunity of stating to the House, in a very few words, his sentiments as to the amount of the proposed establishment. He thought it larger than the country could afford to maintain, because in our present situation we could afford nothing that was not absolutely necessary. As to the property tax, his sentiments concurred entirely with those of the petitioners. The opinion throughout the country was, that it could not be continued during peace without a breach of faith. Without entering minutely into this question, he could only say, that if he were in the situation of his majesty's ministers, he would certainly not press any measure which the country universally understood they had promised not to adopt. It was a tax levied at best upon an assumed income, but in the present times it was a tax upon absolute loss. Chearfully as it had been paid in war, the public had a right now to be relieved from it.

Mr. *Preston* on presenting a petition from the freeholders and inhabitants, of Ashburton, against the property tax, took occasion to repeat some of his observations on the distresses of the agricultural interest, attributing them chiefly to the enormous weight of taxation. He remarked, that one of the pretexts of ministers for continuing the property tax, was, the necessity of supporting that pretty sort of thing called the sinking fund. The petitioners, he said, characterized the tax as odious and inquisitorial, and applicable only to a period of war.

Mr. T. A. Smith presented a petition from the portreeves and other inhabitants of Ashburton, setting forth;

" That the petitioners having, within the last ten days, by themselves and many other of the inhabitants of the said town and borough, petitioned the House, in consequence of a public meeting convened by the portreeves for that purpose, for some relief to be afforded to the agricultural interest of the country at large, from the heavy and burthensome taxes they now pay, and particularly from payment of the tenant's property tax, cannot but express their concern that they should be under the necessity of again stating their sentiments on the same subject; but they are compelled to do so, in consequence of another petition, which they understand is intended to be sent to the House, in terms which they do not approve of, and signed by some of the persons whose names are subscribed to the said former petition; the petitioners lament, in common with their neighbours and the country at large, that there should be occasion to continue the payment of taxes after the restoration of peace, which fall so heavy on the public; but they are well aware, that upon the conclusion of so long and arduous a contest, the expenses necessary to be discharged must require a heavy taxation; they trust, however, that parliament, in its wisdom, will adopt the most effectual and speedy means possible, to reduce the public expenses, and also to lessen the payment of sinecures, pensions, and other burthens of the state; and that the property tax on the tenant, the tax on laboured horses, and some other payments which bear principally on agriculture and on the lower and middling classes of people; and under these circumstances, the petitioners consider that the remainder of the property tax at 5*l.* per cent. if not clothed with such strong and inquisitorial powers, may be kept on foot for two years, and that the money so to be raised will be obtained with less public grievance than in any other way."

Mr. *Preston* said, that the petition evidently prayed against the inquisitorial power, which was a great object of those who opposed the tax altogether.

Mr. *Brougham* observed, that this was the first petition he had heard of, that approved of the property tax, under any modification, and he suggested, that as the good people of Andover had no objection to the tax, it might not be improper to bring in a bill, for the purpose of excepting them if the tax were to be abolished. The willingness with which these petitioners offered themselves for taxation, reminded him of the anecdote which was related of king James 1st, who once asked the opinion of two of his bishops, on the propriety of his levying money by his own authority. One of them, the bishop of Lincoln, replied, that no one could dispute the authority of his majesty, for " he was the breath of their nostrils." Turning to the other, the bishop of Norwich, the king said, " What does your lordship think?" To which he answered, " Your majesty certainly may take the money of my brother of Lincoln." Mr. Brougham said, he thought that the same might now with as good reason be said to the petitioners from Andover [Hear, hear!].

BARRACK DEPARTMENT—PUBLIC DEFAULTERS.] Mr. *Brougham* wished to submit a motion to the House, to which he apprehended there would be no objection. It was for "copies of all correspondence which had taken place between the treasury and the auditor of the barrack department, touching the arrears of that department."

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he believed, from recollection, that the correspondence was extremely voluminous. If the hon. and learned gentleman would point out the particular part of the correspondence to which he wished to refer, there would be every disposition to meet his wishes.

Mr. *Brougham* said, he merely wished to refer to that part which respected the default of Alexander Davison, and general Delancey.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, the whole of this correspondence was very long. The hon. and learned gentleman could, perhaps, suggest some particular point, to which he was desirous of recurring.

Mr. *Brougham* never having seen the correspondence in question, was at a loss to point out the date of that part of the correspondence which had relation to the transaction which he was anxious to bring under the consideration of the House. He would, however, state the circumstance which gave rise to his motion. About a year and a half back, he believed it was, he understood that Mr. Alexander Davison was declared by the auditor of the barrack department to be a defaulter, to the amount of ninety or a hundred thousand pounds, since which no payment had been made, nor had any security been taken, either by issuing an extent or otherwise, to ensure to the public this sum. What he wished to ascertain was, whether any steps had since been taken to recover this balance, and what means had been adopted to prevent the issuing of an extent which was the usual course on such occasions?

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he could, he believed, in a few words, explain this transaction. It was true that the auditor-general did report to the treasury that a balance was due by Alexander Davison, to the amount stated, being a balance of his account with general Delancy. Mr. Davison had, however, disputed this claim, and the subject was now undergoing an investigation in the court of exchequer. In the mean time, the treasury had felt it their duty to secure the public, be the result of this inquiry what it might, and they were about to issue an extent against Mr. Davison, when he came forward and offered ample security on real property, to abide the event. This was accepted, but the extent was still kept hanging over him.

Mr. *Brougham* said, that if this explanation turned out to be consistent with the real circumstances of the case, nothing could be more satisfactory. He was anxious, however, that the House should be satisfied on the subject, and as the best mode of coming at that part of the correspondence which was necessary to decide the question, he thought he might, as had been done on former occasions, be permitted to see the correspondence, in order that he might select what he wanted.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, there was no objection whatever to this, and the hon. and learned gentleman might see the correspondence any day he chose to call at the treasury.

Mr. Brougham then withdrew his motion.

ARMY ESTIMATES.] Mr. Osborne appeared at the bar with the Report of the Army Estimates. On the question, that the said report be brought up,

Mr. *Cocks* said, he wished to take that opportunity of offering a few remarks upon the question embraced by this report. He considered that at the present crisis of the country, no subject was of more importance than its military policy, or called for more dispassionate and minute deliberation. It appeared to him that throughout the late momentous war in which we had been engaged, his majesty's ministers had deserved the confidence of the country, and therefore it was that he viewed with more regret the course which they were now taking. It was but justice to remark, that as far as our external interests were concerned, in the arrangements resulting from the recent peace, nothing could be more satisfactory, or be better calculated to obtain perfect security. It was to be lamented, however, that in turning our eyes to our internal situation, the same sources of pleasure were not to be found. Without, all was prosperity; within, nothing but distress and misery. In such a situation of things at home, it was the duty of every member of that House not to give a vote in favour of any measure which went to impose upon the country an unnecessary expense. If ever there was a period when this precaution was more necessary than another, it was the present. The House was on all occasions the guardians of the people, and it was now peculiarly the guardians of their distresses. It behoved them to scrutinise every item of expense which was suggested, with the utmost jealousy, and not to suffer a farthing to be drawn from the country which was to be avoided. With these feelings he should proceed to view the question before the House. He did not pretend to know what might be an adequate force for the protection of our colonies. He was aware that those colonies had been increased, and that the state of Ireland, too, required the employment of a large force. Be this as it might, he thought, in a state of peace, and considering the distresses of the country, we ought to go as much as possible, in the arrangement of our military establishment, upon the principle adopted in 1792. Judging by this principle, he could not imagine that it was necessary to vote so large a number of men for the service of England as 25,000. In 1792, the number of men voted for England was but 17,000. This he thought was quite adequate to the purposes of the country, and ought to form the basis of our present arrangements. We were told that our garrisons were increased in many parts of the country, and that an additional number of men, of consequence, was necessary. Admitting all this, however, he was at a loss to account for the enormous extent of one particular species of force—he alluded to that of cavalry. From the estimates before the House, he was led to conclude, that the cavalry was to comprise no less a number than 14,300. He confessed he was struck with the extraordinary extent of this force, inasmuch as he could not immediately discover its utility in a time of peace. The defence of our colonies, with the exception of the Cape of Good Hope, did not require cavalry. The cavalry of India and France was distinct from this estimate; so that it appeared that this immense body was to be applicable to Ireland and England alone. How it could be necessary for those countries was beyond his comprehension. He did not presume to say what was the necessary number of cavalry for Ireland; but the proportion to 25,000 men, he apprehended, did not exceed from three to four thousand. Eleven thousand, therefore, was left for England alone. In 1792, the whole amount of the cavalry embodied did not exceed three thousand odd, which made an enormous difference of force and expense. He therefore could not see why so many cavalry were necessary. We had now 6,500 more than at any former period, and this only for the purpose of preventing smuggling. He entreated the House to consider whether the number proposed was absolutely necessary; if it was not, it became the duty of every member to vote against it.

Mr. *Newman* conceived, that the maintaining so large a body of cavalry, as had been stated by the hon. gentleman who had just sat down, would have the most pernicious effect upon the morals of the people of this country. He particularly objected to the employment of this species of force in the protection of the revenue; because he believed the men more capable of being bribed than any others—added to which, they would obtain such irregular habits as would necessarily prove destructive to that discipline which it was desirable, on all occasions, to maintain in the British army. Indeed he thought them little better than a species of guerrillas. Another point of view in which the maintaining so large a body of cavalry was objectionable was, the increase which would necessarily take place in the poor-rates. It was true that their residence in our villages might promote the recruiting of young dragoons, but the morals of the people would be the sacrifice. At the moment of the return of peace it was important that our military establishment should be reduced to the lowest possible standard; and conceiving, as he did, that attention had not been paid to the suggestions, that had been thrown out on this head, he should vote against the resolution of the committee being adopted by the House. Another point to which he wished to call the attention of the House, was the yeomanry cavalry. Though, under some circumstances, such a force might be necessary, he did not think it was called for at present. In time of peace such a body was, in a moral point of view, very objectionable. He had been told by farmers, whose sons had entered the yeoman cavalry, that they were ruined in consequence. He had also known men, who were very good farmers, before they attached themselves to such corps, but who soon forgot the agricultural knowledge they had previously acquired. The hon. gentleman then adverted to the increase of the household troops, and expressed his opinion, that they ought to be reduced. The foot-guards had also been greatly extended. It would be a very great benefit to the country if their establishment was also confined within more narrow bounds. The noble lord opposite had stated, that they were more available now than formerly. That might be very true. But if the service of other troops, equally good, could be procured at a more moderate expense, it would be better, in the present state of the country, to employ them. They ought now to study the useful instead of the ornamental. As to the pensions, he quite agreed with an hon. gentleman, that though the expense was very heavy, it was incurred in supporting persons who were every way deserving of it. The local militia appeared to him to be altogether unnecessary. The military college, though he approved of the establishment, might, he thought, be supported at a less expense. The retired chaplains cost the country a very large sum; but, if a military church were to be built, and he understood such a work was in contemplation, those persons might be employed in it. In conclusion, the hon. member expressed his determination, however painful it was to him, to vote against the estimates, as they now stood.

Colonel *Foley* intreated the House to look at the present state of the country, and, having examined it minutely, to say, whether it was such as would justify the keeping on foot a single soldier more than absolute necessity called for. Those who took such a view of our internal concerns, must be convinced, that the country was in a state which called for the strictest economy, even in the most trifling things. That this establishment was only to be continued for a short time, was an argument that did not weigh with him. He felt a strong constitutional jealousy on the subject of a standing army. It was a principle which their fathers always cherished, and he hoped their sons would not shrink from maintaining it. He did not say that this great establishment would threaten any danger to the country, to-day or to-morrow; but he would impress on the House the necessity of watching, with vigilant care, the introduction of any system, that might, in the end, be detrimental to that constitution which was so dear and so sacred to them. It was said, the establishment would last only for a short time. They, however, had no time to lose. Instant economy was called for. And, if they did not proceed immediately upon a course of retrenchment, the tradesmen and farmers, throughout the country, would inevitably be ruined. In Ireland, it appeared, a large force was to be employed. He saw no reason for it. If the taxes were reduced, there would be no necessity for a standing army there. A conciliatory system might allay that ferment in the public mind, which dragooning never could. But, if the House and his majesty's ministers made light of the sufferings and distresses of the Irish people, perhaps a much greater army would be called for, than that which was now determined on. An observation had been made, which, coming from the hon. member for Buckingham (Mr. Fremantle) who had himself held a high office, struck him very forcibly. That hon. gentleman had said, that millions (he did not know whether he mentioned many millions) could be saved to the country, by a revision of the office-establishments. In the present burthened and oppressed situation of the country, such a measure would be attended with incalculable benefit. But he gave little credit to the professions of economy, of which he had heard so much from the other side, and seen so little. How could he credit them, when ministers, with the word 'economy' in their mouths, came down to the House, and asked them for a military establishment of 161,000 men, in a time of profound peace? They told the House, that if they made every retrenchment in their power, the saving to the country would "only" be 600,000*l*. "Only" six hundred thousand pounds! That was not the language in which he would speak of such a sum. That was not the language in which, at any time, but particularly at the present moment, it ought to be spoken of. Dreading so large an establishment as dangerous, in a constitutional point of view, and knowing that the nation was not able to support the expense, he must object to it. In doing this, he felt that he was discharging a sacred duty both to his constituents and to the country.

Mr. *Courtenay* said, there never was an occasion on which the members of that House were more imperatively called on to examine the estimates laid before them, than they were at present. The conclusions, however, to which he had come, after an attentive consideration of the subject, were very different from those that the hon. gentleman who spoke last had arrived at. Unquestionably, they had a most important question to consider. On the one hand, they had to take care that no burthen was placed on the people, beyond what was absolutely necessary; but the hon. gentleman must allow, that they also had a duty to perform towards themselves and the country, and that they ought not to shrink from imposing a burthen, if it were evidently called for. They ought not to give way to any thing, in the shape of remonstrance or complaint, which they did not conceive to be well-founded. The Prince Regent's ministers called for the number of troops which appeared, in their judgment, necessary for the service of the empire. Their judgment undoubtedly might be erroneous; and, if it were so—if a less establishment would answer the purpose—no man could attempt to argue that it ought not to be preferred to the larger one. This subject had been discussed on two distinct lines of objection; and he thought the course taken, in debating the question on going into the committee, was, in the view entertained of the question by gentlemen opposite, perfectly correct and parliamentary. If he had, like them, considered the whole system improper, he would have proceeded in the same way, and called on ministers to go back to the Crown, and to introduce the estimates in a new shape. But he took a view of the question he was not ashamed to say, totally different. He could see nothing in the conduct of the present government, from which it could be inferred, that they would unnecessarily or improperly demand a large military force, that might have an operation inimical to the free constitution of England. If he felt any such apprehension, he would have taken the course adopted by gentlemen opposite. He now came to consider whether the army proposed was unnecessary, or disproportioned to our means of supporting it. In the first place, it was proper to look to the colonies. The government of the country were bound to afford protection to those colonies, whether conquered by force of arms, or ceded to us by treaties; and the question was, whether that protection could be given, in a manner less burthensome to the country, than that which ministers had proposed.—As to one branch of the service, there appeared in that House to be very little difference of opinion. He alluded to the force destined for Ireland. The right hon. secretary for Ireland had shown in his able speech on the state of that country, that far other remedies than a military force were necessary to render the people tranquil and peaceable. But still every person who looked to the history of Ireland, must see, that, in the course of the next two years, it was absolutely necessary to employ a large military body there.—With respect to the colonies, if government intended they should remain with us, they must be adequately protected. Gentlemen had observed, that, at the present moment, there was no fear of their being invaded; and, that even if they were attacked, the inhabitants might defend themselves. Such an argument he thought most disgraceful. Having taken certain colonies under their care, it would be shameful if they neglected to provide for their defence. With respect to the reduction proposed by his hon. friend (Mr. Bankes), he could not call to his mind any data on which they could be founded. He could not see on what safe parliamentary grounds his hon. friend had come to the conclusions he stated to the House. He could understand the line of argument taken by gentlemen opposite, who applied themselves to the danger to be apprehended from keeping up a large military force. Though he did not agree with them in opinion, he understood their argument perfectly. He was satisfied, in his own mind, notwithstanding what had fallen from his hon. friend, that the safety of the colonies demanded the force stated in the estimates, and, therefore, he should support the proposition.—He now came to inquire, whether the army intended to be stationed in England was more than the necessity of the case called for. He thought, considering the various duties which were to be performed, that the force specified was not too great. As to the cavalry, about which so much had been said, not more than 7000 would remain in England. Great objection was made to the employment of those troops, in the suppression of smuggling, because, it was said, that their morals and discipline would be destroyed. This observation would, however, have more weight, if the practice were a new one. Ever since smuggling had existed, the light horse of this country had been employed in its prevention; and he was sure recent events had proved, that their discipline had not suffered in consequence. The hon. gentleman who spoke last had alluded to the possibility of making great savings. Now, he did not like these general assertions, especially when they came on second-hand authority. Such statements, though they could effect little in that House, might produce considerable mischief out of doors. He did not mean to say, that even savings, or small sums, should be treated with levity; but it was wrong to adopt a loose, general statement, and to throw it out as worthy of attention, when, in fact, it rested on no solid foundation. This brought him back to the point from which he had started, which was, that whether millions, or hundreds of thousands, or even thousands, could be saved, that House ought to make the necessary reduction. But it was the duty of individuals, who best knew that those savings could not be made, to state their opinion fairly, and not to shrink from that opinion, however unpopular it might be. It was necessary to maintain our colonial possessions, although it obliged government to impose burthens on the people. The system of the country had been to procure colonial possessions; and from those possessions prosperity and riches had flowed upon the country. The question, then, was, not whether protection should be afforded them—but whether it could be given at a cheap rate. Those who thought it could, ought certainly to oppose the plan laid before the House; but those who, like himself, believed it was impossible to protect them at a more moderate expense, would feel that they were acting conscientiously and wisely in voting for it. Looking to the old colonies, it did appear to him, that, from the situation in which the black population of St. Domingo were now placed, and from the increasing energies of the American people, it was necessary that they should be secured as much as possible. The evil which would arise, if any one colony were left too weakly defended, would be greater, not merely to that colony, but to the country at large, than the keeping up of an overpowering military establishment, immense as he admitted the danger to be, from such a force. The mixing up this question with the property tax (an attempt which had failed in producing the effect desired), appeared to him to be highly improper. It was clearly shown that no practicable reduction could be made in the military establishment, that would render it unnecessary to call for that tax. It would, therefore, have been a more statesman-like mode of argument, to have divided the two questions. He could neither agree in the views of the hon. gentleman who wished the whole system to be new-modelled, nor yet could he concur in the plan of his hon. friend (Mr. Bankes), who wished, by various reductions, to save two or three millions. Those only who wished the plan laid before the House by ministers to be totally abandoned, could mix up the two questions with any propriety. The individuals who demanded a few reductions, could not, although they had done so, mingle the consideration of the two points, with the smallest show of reason; because they must have known, even when they called for those reductions, that, if they were granted, still the property tax would be necessary.

Sir *John Newport* said, the only consideration which could induce him to vote for the employment of so large a force as 25,000 men in Ireland, was, that this was merely a temporary measure, intended to repress temporary atrocities, with which it was only possible to wrestle with a force of that kind. He could not but deprecate in the strongest terms that unwillingness which was manifested to inquire into the condition of Ireland, with a view to afford a remedy for the evils from which that country suffered—a country which must either prove a source of strength or a source of weakness to the empire, according to the policy which might be adopted towards it. He was convinced that nothing short of a clear and determined examination of all the grievances which had affected Ireland—not from the misconduct of the government of this or that day, but from the misconduct of all the governments of Ireland—would do for the people of that country. Ireland was now reaping the fruits of British injustice. He claimed, therefore, as an act of justice to Ireland—as an act of justice to the United Empire—that they would examine with the utmost attention, that they would strictly scrutinize the mischiefs of the system of government which, to the digrace of this country, had so long afflicted Ireland. The population of that country was too large to be trodden down; and if parliament would not look into their grievances, they would soon know to their cost what it was to exasperate a whole nation. He had said so much, on this occasion because he painfully felt how much it was the system of that House to postpone Irish affairs to the very latest period of the session, when so many members, either from business or from pleasure, or any pretext on which they could possibly get away, absented themselves from their duty in parliament. If the noble lord opposite (Castlereagh) had ventured to descend from his high imperial intercourse to examine a little into the condition of his own suffering country, and not merely left it to come out in a consideration of the military estimates whether any attention would be paid to Ireland, it would not have lowered that noble lord, perhaps, in the estimation of those whose opinion was of most value [Hear, hear!]. But if that noble lord chose to withdraw himself from the consideration of the condition of his own country, it was the duty of the House in every sense, to adopt a different line of conduct, for there was a resolution on their Journals, that at an early period of the present session, the system of the two exchequers of England and Ireland was to be taken into consideration. But it was still endeavoured to conquer by the same system of delay which had been so long adopted. His majesty's ministers might consider Ireland in their estimates as contributing to the expenses of the empire: but the House must be told that Ireland could not take upon her the charges which she had hitherto borne, from the state of absolute ruin into which she was plunged [Hear!]. Above three fourths of the population of that country were dependent on agriculture. It was for the House to consider how soon they would restore that system which had given employment and subsistence to that people—and if not, how long they could keep them down by such a force as 25,000 men? If they did not afford the proper remedy, they would soon have a suffering peasantry and an impoverished and beggared gentry, who would feel, what he never thought they would have occasion to feel, that the intercourse with this country had been a curse to them. But, independently of the just claims of the Irish population on the attention of the House, the interest of England was here deeply affected; for did not the impoverishment of Ireland produce the impoverishment of England? The Custom-house accounts would teach them, that the importation of all articles of mere necessity in the daily habits of life into Ireland had greatly decreased—the peasant wore a coat in rags, because he could not afford to buy another. He would implore the House, again and again, not to consider this as a cursory subject—a subject which they could examine at their convenience and leisure,—but to afford, without delay, a constitutional remedy to a suffering people; and if they brought soldiers into the country to repress the crimes and atrocities which at present prevailed in Ireland, that they would also inquire into and put a stop to those grievances by which the crimes and atrocities were occasioned —[Hear, hear!].

Mr. *Charles Grant*, jun. begged leave to disclaim any wish on the part of his majesty's government to keep down Ireland with an armed force. He might say that his majesty's government were as much convinced as the hon. baronet of the truth of the sentiments which he had just delivered; and he appealed to the speech of his right hon. friend, the secretary for Ireland on a late occasion, for a confirmation of what he had asserted. With respect to the question more immediately before them, there were two ways in which it might be considered; first, what was the extent of forces which our finances enabled us to keep up; and, secondly, what was the amount of force which the defence of our empire required. If it was true that we were at the end of our finances, then this was no longer a political but a financial system—then he would say, reduce the extent of the empire which your finances will not allow you to retain; because it was the greatest of all follies to wish to keep possession of an empire which we could not afford to protect. But he was convinced that the country had resources, and though its distress was unquestionable, the cause of that distress was temporary. It did not follow, because he sympathised with the distress, that he should conclude our resources were exhausted. We had now conceded 8 millions of taxation, and if this relief was not adequate to the general expectation, it was, after the close of so arduous a contest, as much as the immediate circumstances of the country admitted. At the end of the American war it had also been loudly proclaimed, that the national means were exhausted: an hon. gentleman had even said, that the country was exhausted. What had then been the conduct of Mr. Pitt? He felt, in 1783, that he ought to look to something beyond the prevailing wishes of the people; that he had their general security to provide for, and that a time would come when, emerging from their error, they would trace back to his measures the causes of their prosperity or their decline. The good effects of these magnanimous counsels were afterwards realized in the progressive strength of the empire, and in the accumulation of those vast resources which had enabled Great Britain to effect all her subsequent achievements. He might have been then told, as the present ministers now were, about military despotism, and the uselessness of colonies; but in the face of all these difficulties he ventured to propose new taxes. Parliament had the wisdom to impose them. Their beneficial results were known. Why, then, should not the same system be at present adopted? It was agreed on all sides that a considerable increase in the establishment, in comparison with that of 1792, was necessary; but why should the House be entirely bound by the establishment of that period? It was the situation of the empire, and of Europe, that ought to form the object of their consideration. It had never been the policy of a British statesman to look with indifference at the state of Europe. It was said that it was our policy to entangle ourselves too deeply with European politics; but he would ask when it had been less so? Was it under William 3d, or under queen Anne? The question was not now, whether the country should be raised to the highest pitch of glory and of power, but whether, having obtained that point it would be wise to abandon it. Experience had shown us the possibility of maintaining our ascendancy in Europe without equalling the numerical strength of her armies. But it was necessary to consider what was the state of Europe when Mr. Pitt proposed the establishment of 1792. Never had the arts and sciences, and the civil power been more predominant than between the close of the American war and that period. There were then not 500,000 men in arms on the continent, and now there were upwards of 1,400,000. France, which had always been the chief object of our alarm, was then in such a situation, that Mr. Burke had said that when he looked at the map of Europe, he found that France no longer existed. It was at such a period that Mr. Pitt had proposed his establishment; but how different was now the nature of things! It was asked, was this the result of our exertions and our sacrifices? Had we not attained our object? The fact was, we had gained every thing, but we had not yet secured it. The skill and wisdom that had led to the acquirement, must now be employed in fixing and securing the enjoyment of the blessing. There yet remained for us a victory over the elements of discord in Europe—over the principles of Jacobinism, from which so many mischiefs had originated—over the military spirit which had so long disturbed the world, and which was not yet extirpated. They had to diffuse throughout Europe a sense of security and adequate protection among the civil part of the population, to enable them to feel their proper weight in the state, and lower down the military to a due subserviency to the civil authority. A constitutional objection had been stated to an increase of our establishments beyond that of former periods. If that increase of our establishments, which our extended empire now demanded, were incompatible with our constitution, he should have no hesitation in at once saying, rather reduce your empire than invade your constitution. But was it true that the constitution which was fit for a small state was unfit for a mighty empire? Whoever looked at our constitution must acknowledge that one of its most striking features was the facility with which it adapted itself to all the exigencies of a nation, to every new and unforeseen combination of circumstances in the progress of a great, a growing, and extended empire. The constitution of some countries, like that of Sparta, for instance, had been found, by experience, suitable only to the community for which it was originally framed. Our own possessed the faculty of developing every variety of resource, and every principle of action—of causing the democratic interest to keep pace with the prerogatives of the Crown. The resources which it developed were always sufficient to meet the difficulty of the occasion. If the royal authority, for instance, was increased, that increase had been accompanied by a corresponding accession to the democratical part of the constitution. If the demands of the empire required the maintenance of a great military force, the constitution itself afforded a power to keep that force in check. The general diffusion of information, the rapidly increasing weight of public opinion, the increasing opulence and strength of the country—these were the resources with which our constitution supplied us, and enabled us to avert the dangers which threatened an extensive empire. These were the correctives of power with which we were supplied by our constitution. If it was said, that we had tripled our armies, he would say that the checks of those armies were also at the same time more than tripled; and that all those checks, all those resources which we derived from the diffusion of knowledge and the increase of wealth, constituted as it were a source of vitality which would always be found adequate to our protection, and never allow us to be reduced to the alternative of consulting our safety at the expense of the integrity of a mighty empire [Hear, hear!]. But it had been said the constitutions of the states of former times were overturned by standing armies, by armies drawn from the bosom of the countries which they enslaved. He must, however, take the liberty of saying, that the precedents had been brought forward in too indefinitive a manner to afford any conclusion to be drawn from them. Without a reference to the constitution of the country and to the constitution of the army itself by which it had been subjugated, to the number of the population compared with the number of the army, it was impossible to draw any satisfactory inference with regard to any other country—these were data, without which it would be found impossible to solve the problem, how far the military energies of a people might with safety be developed in a period of peace—these were data without which they must leave the problem as it was. Those who argued from the history of the states in question, were apt to overlook a most material circumstance, that a great part of their population was not applicable to any struggle between the civil and military authority, was locked up in domestic slavery. He would take a state of a population of 300,000, with an army of 30,000, the state of Athens, for instance, or any other similarly circumstanced—could it be conceived that the whole of that population acted as a check on the army? Why, that population was more than half composed of slaves, who were a source of weakness rather than of strength, in any such struggles as those alluded to. But the example of that state was not applicable here, it was not applicable to this country where the whole weight of the civil population could be brought into operation against the military. It was not merely on the superior information which we possessed, the rapid circulation of that information, on which we had to rely for a defence against our armies, the constitution of those armies was perpetually under the superintendence and control of parliament. The balance between the military and civil power was held by parliament. We had a security in the information and liberal sentiments of the army, who entered into all political discussions as well as other individuals. We had a security in the general intelligence of our armies, which descended even to our soldier; who by a most unexampled union carried with him the hopes and wishes which belonged to the citizen of a free state, with the most perfect habits of obedience. To this intelligence of his rights, was in a great measure to be attributed the superiority of the British soldier, and to speak in the language of a great poet,

> "The scorn of death in freedom's sacred cause,
> "And freeborn thoughts, that league with freedom's laws."

It was this national character which conquered on all occasions. This it was that had made the scene of Waterloo so interesting, when we regarded it not only as the triumph of British valour, but as the triumph of the British constitution. He should sit down after making one more observation. Alarm had been expressed at the military spirit diffused through the nation. What, he would ask, had occasioned that military spirit? It was the tremendous war just closed. It was the exigencies of Europe. It was that great danger with which the world was threatened from the preponderancy of the military principle, and which nothing but a military spirit could subdue. But when that duty had been performed, and danger was apprehended from the excess of that military spirit, how was it to be put down? Was it by violent measures—was it by wounding the feelings of the army—was it by throwing ridicule on those who had worked the safety of Europe? He regretted that even the foibles of that class of men had ever been attacked. He thought those foibles deserved some indulgence, when it was considered with how many good qualities they were united. When it was considered that we were now sitting quietly at our ease at the expense of their blood; that the safety of the country had been secured by them, he thought it was a little ungracious that on the very first opportunity which presented itself after that security had been achieved, we should turn round and attempt to throw ridicule on them. He confessed he felt for that class of men—but they were proof against such taunts; and it might be said of them, as it was said of an ancient hero, that he was protected from injury by the glory of the triumphs which he had achieved. Still, however, he thought the magnitude of their services ought to render them sacred from unnecessary attack, and to teach Englishmen to look back to them with gratitude [Hear, hear!].

Mr. *Wynn* said, he had never heard of those attacks which had been mentioned on the noble class of men in question. He wished to know at what period, and from what quarter of the House, those taunts had been thrown out, of which he professed himself ignorant. He would expressly maintain, that neither this year, nor so long as he had had a seat in that House, had any such taunts been thrown out in his hearing. This was a subject of too serious a nature to be allowed to pass without farther explanation [Hear, hear!]

Mr. *Grant* said, he alluded to the ridicule thrown on the foibles of the army.

What foibles? was immediately asked by a number of members.

Mr. *Grant* said, the perpetual ridicule of their dress [Hear! from the opposition].

Mr. *Wynn* did not believe that there was a gentleman in that House who believed that the ridicule was not justly and properly directed against the dress by which that noble class of men had been disfigured; [Hear, hear!] and on which, God knew, that noble class of men was not intended to be attacked. He would ask any gentleman, if he believed that the fooleries and fopperies of some regiments of dragoons were the wish of their officers? The officers of some regiments which he could point out, had not been yearly, but quarterly obliged to equip themselves anew. The ridiculous trappings which meritorious officers had been obliged to appear in, had never been brought forward with the view of ridiculing the officers, but those who exposed them to appear in such a disguise—the real authors of the foibles. It had been said that the British constitution was adequate to all emergencies, and they had heard much of the free thoughts of the army. He had not, however, he confessed so very high an opinion of the political science of our soldiers. He questioned whether the private of a marching regiment knew exactly the privileges which he enjoyed under the British constitution—how far he was bound to obey his officers. If an officer were to direct him to march into that House, and turn out the members by the point of his bayonet, he questioned whether he would say to the officer there your authority stops. This might be, but he did not wish to see the experiment made [a laugh]. He had always understood, that the great principle of military government was, that the soldier should ask no questions, nor look to any guide but the commands of his superior. With reference to our colonial possessions, it was said, that it became our duty to protect those who were transferred to our power. It certainly did, but not to an extent incompatible with the interests of our population at home. The defence of the colonies should rest on our maritime strength, and if it was necessary to maintain in addition an unusual establishment of force for their protection, it would then be a question, whether the advantages we derived from their possession were equal to the expense of maintaining them. The hon. member then took a review of the past state of the country, for the purpose of showing that those establishments were not deemed necessary in much more pressing moments than could now be anticipated. The benefits of a reduction of our force to the lowest possible amount were to be found not only in the immediate saving, but in the capacity which the country thus acquired, of making the efforts which any new war might render necessary. From the economy practised after the peace of Versailles the country was enabled to bear the great expenditure which the late war had occasioned. With a view to this reduction he thought it would have been advisable to instruct the committee to divide the amount of force voted into the numbers necessary for England, Ireland, or foreign service. To look for instance at the recent increase of the household cavalry. In the year 1792, just after the period of the then peace, the number of household cavalry was 785. In the year 1801 it was 1,101; last year it was 1,504; and, in the present, 1,744; so that an increase of no less than 240 had taken place since last year. Now he wished to know why a greater amount was required for a peace establishment at this time than at any former one? It was no argument that because these troops had been useful in time of war at Waterloo, that they should be continued in time of peace. It could not be said, that they were required for the peace of the metropolis, for that was sufficiently secured when their number was only 785. Was it meant that the remainder should be employed in turn with the other regiments, to prevent smuggling? Nothing could be more ridiculous than to employ these great horses to trot up and down the Sussex cliffs after smugglers. A proper guard of honour for the court should be retained, and the rest be replaced by less expensive troops. Another very extraordinary preparation for peace was the increase of every cavalry regiment, by 128 men. With regard to the ridicule of the dress of the army, which he had before alluded to, he would add, that it was not confined to that House; for a general officer had actually memorialed against its introduction into his regiment. The concluding prayer in that memorial was, that the new helmet should not be inflicted upon his regiment.—Adverting to the force appointed for the protection of our colonies, he could not conceive why the island of Jamaica required an establishment of 400 men. If a garrison was necessary, there could be no reason why the colony should not maintain it, without any assistance from the finances of the mother country, as it did from 1792 to 1803. A good deal had been said about the political condition of St. Domingo, and the danger that might be apprehended from that quarter; but looking at the confined resources of that island, and its entire want of a naval power, he could not think that danger either imminent, or, if so, capable of being averted by the establishment in question. A garrison of 4000 men could not afford that protection, in case of an attempted invasion, which we could find in our maritime strength. Another item of our foreign establishments seemed to him still more unnecessary, and, though not extensive, betraying an inattention to that economy which the circumstances of the country called upon ministers to practise—he meant the 1,200 men appointed as a guard to the great person confined at St. Helena. The other great powers considered him their prisoner as well as ours, but we were to have the honour and expense of being his keepers. The allies, he thought, should contribute to pay a guard, seeing that they considered their own interests equally concerned in his detention with ours. The noble lord (Castlereagh) had given as a reason why, even in the greatest practicable reduction of our establishments a great expenditure would still be necessary, that a great dead weight was created upon the funds of the country by the effects of his late right hon. friend (Mr. Windham's) plan. The amount of pensions created by it was certainly considerable, but if they were improperly bestowed, the noble lord was himself responsible for the result, as he, and the administration to which he belonged, came into office only a year after the passing of this act, and might have easily carried its repeal. It could not have been repealed as far as regarded those men that entered the army under its provisions, but it might have closed with regard to all future enlistments. For himself, he certainly did not lament that this plan had not been repealed, notwithstanding the expense it had occasioned; since it had overcome the reluctance to enter into the military service which had formerly existed. There were many objections to the proposed establishments in a constitutional point of view, but the objections of a financial nature were not less valid. The smallest saving should be attended to. The noble lord had mentioned 600,000*l.* as all the deduction that would accrue from disbanding twenty thousand men. This estimate he thought far too low, but, assuming it as all that could be anticipated, it was still a saving of great importance in our present difficulties. It would enable us to pay the interest of the loan which might be raised instead of the property tax, and even establish a sinking fund to pay off the capital. It was the imperative duty of the House, however small the possible reduction was, to effect it, and follow it up by the strictest regard to economy in all the public departments.

Sir *John Beresford* rose to make an observation on the military force necessary for the protection of our West India colonies. Referring to what had fallen from an hon. member, on a former evening, concerning the sufficiency of a floating force for their defence, he said, he thought, that such a force was by no means adequate, and could not always be applicable. He himself had been on that station for eight years, and was well acquainted with the state of the islands; but he would not undertake to defend them with the force in question. He had lately conversed on the subject with a gallant officer who had conquered some of those possessions, and having asked his opinion, he received for answer, that if a floating force was employed, there could be no saving, for there must be such a force for every particular colony. Where could these floating garrisons go to in the hurricane season? The hon. gentleman who thought the West India islands could be defended by 1,500 men, could have had but little information respecting those possessions. Barbadoes alone would require that number.

Lord *Milton*, in answer to the observations of a right hon. gentleman (Mr. Grant) who had spoken with so much eloquence, contended, that our constitution could not be considered as exempt from danger during the existence of a standing army. However great were the energies which the nation had developed, however extended were our foreign possessions, and whatever mass of influence the civil power derived from the possession of wealth and the diffusion of knowledge, would our constitution be in less danger because we had added to our dominions islands in the Mediterranean, and in the East and West Indies? The noble lord opposite in defending the necessity of the proposed enormous establishment, had said, that we were now in an intermediate state between peace and war, and contended that the same thing occurred after the peace of 1783, when there was likewise an intermediate state. The noble lord did not seem well versed in history, or much acquainted with the precedent to which he referred. The establishment in 1783 after the American war was exceedingly low, when contrasted with the estimates on the table, and very inconsiderably reduced, in any period of the peace, below the estimates for the first year. In 1784 the whole establishments, including guards and garrisons, Gibraltar, &c. amounted only to 29,730 men. Of this number the vote for Great Britain was only 17,483. Two years afterwards, in 1786, when the temper of peace might be supposed confirmed, and the intermediate state of the noble lord at an end, the difference was only 200 men. Here the noble lord, charging the noble secretary of state for foreign affairs with an ignorance of history, stated the peace establishments in the first and second years of the various periods of peace, from that of Utrecht downwards, as derived from documents produced upon his own motion. In 1711, our establishment during the war amounted to 201,000; in 1714 it was reduced to 21,000. Thus nine-tenths of the army was at once reduced. In 1713, the force reduced was 70,000 men. It was true they were chiefly foreign troops, but they were paid by England, and commanded by English officers. The next treaty of peace, after a great war, was that of Aix-la-Chapelle, in 1748, the force was then reduced in one year from 49,939 to 18,857. On the peace of 1763 the reduction was still greater, for the force which had been voted in that year was 56,360, that voted in the next year was 17,532. Thus, whatever was the opinion of the present day, it never had before been thought necessary to have any intermediate establishments; for all these reductions which he had quoted were not only rapid, but had brought at once our force down to that level at which it had been kept during all the time of peace. There was, he said, no inconsistency in demanding a reduction of our establishments, without approving of the treaties. He had not arraigned the treaties because he dreaded immediate war, but because when war, at a future distant time might break out, they gave us no sufficient security against the power of France. The noble lord must either think his treaties secure or insecure. If they were secure, our military establishments should be reduced much lower; if insecure, they should have been raised much higher. The honourable admiral who had said that he could not undertake to defend the West Indies with a floating force, might have been correct in his opinion, but the question was not as to the force necessary to defend those islands in war, but what was the smallest possible force which could be left there in time of peace. Had we not embassadors at the courts of Paris and Madrid who would advertise the preparation of armaments in the harbours of Brest or Cadiz? Adverting to the establishment for the Mauritius, he thought it extravagantly high. The garrison which was to be left in Mauritius was three thousand men. While that island was in the hands of the house of Bourbon, an engineer had reported to the French government that 2000 men were quite enough to defend it; and the abbé Raynal, in commenting upon the amount of this force, had said, it became only necessary for the purpose of preventing the effect of a sudden attack from the naval force of England. Why were we to keep up 3000 men to defend the strongest island in the world against France, who had no fleet, and with whom we were at peace. In the history of the island by Grant viscount de Vaux, it would be seen that there was a hill behind the town in that island, which 400 men might defend for a considerable time: this was a security against sudden attack. This detail might seem unimportant, but it showed the extravagant disposition in which the whole estimates were formed, and which was more and more apparent in proportion as they were closely examined. The noble lord said, he agreed with every opinion in the speech of an hon. gentleman (Mr. Bankes) on a former night. It was a speech for which he felt grateful, and which had never yet been answered, because it could not be answered. The noble lord (Castlereagh), had said, that the utmost saving in the establishment would not perhaps exceed 2 or 300,000*l.*, but the hon. member for Corfe castle had clearly shown that two millions might be saved. It was said of a man attacked by an epilepsy, that when the fit terminated, he finished a sentence which he had commenced before the attack—and he begged leave to say, that the noble lord seemed the other night only to finish some remarks which he had commenced in 1807. He referred to the noble lord's animadversions, which he might as well have spared, upon a distinguished individual now no more (Mr. Windham), and in which animadversions the noble lord thought proper to charge that great man with saddling the country with what he called a night-mare. But these animadversions were not creditable either to the noble lord's judgment or liberality. For of what did this night-mare consist? why, of a provision for the comfort of those gallant men who had bled to establish the safety and exalt the glory of the country. For this provision the army were indebted to the wisdom and justice of Mr. Windham, against whose plan the noble lord never ceased to cavil, because it produced an expense of about 4 or 500,000*l.* a year. Yet, to this expense for such a purpose, the noble lord perpetually objected, because he, truly, was so tenacious of economy—he who talked of millions for other objects with such levity, complained of the appropriation of 400,000*l.* or 500,000*l.* to improve the pay and pensions of our soldiery—to provide those valiant warriors with something like the means of subsistence in the evening of their lives. Such, indeed, was the noble lord's hostility to this arrangement, that death itself could not save the author of it from his censure. As to the remarks of his hon. friend on the floor, upon the singularly novel dress of the soldiery, it was quite a perversion to say that those remarks were meant in any degree to detract from the merit of the heroes of Salamanca, Vittoria, or Waterloo. No; these remarks applied only to the authors of such foppery, which was known to be so disgusting in the army itself, that he was credibly informed none were so forward to reprobate it as our principal military officers. He had heard indeed, and he believed the statement to be true, that the distinguished commander of Waterloo would not allow those fopperies to appear in the field. How, then, could it be deemed disrespectful to the army to ridicule such fooleries? The ridicule was indeed only applicable to 'those who had such foppish articles put on the heads and backs of our soldiery. With respect to the statement, that if our army were disbanded, the poor-rates were likely to be more burthened, the hon. gentleman who made that statement had not, he apprehended, any very accurate knowledge of the country. For his own part, he could say, from his own experience as a magistrate, that he never found disbanded soldiers apt to become any burthen upon the parochial rates, nor had he ever heard so from any other magistrate. But if the hon. gentleman's apprehensions were well founded, what would that avail in favour of his argument? For what did it signify in what way the money was taken from the pockets of the people, whether in poor-rates or other taxes. The former would, in his view, be the preferable mode of providing for the men alluded to; for they were, according to the measure under consideration to be maintained as a standing army, not only in a manner more injurious to our finances, but upon a principle seriously dangerous to our constitution. When he spoke of danger to the constitution, he did not mean in the sense which an hon. gentleman thought proper to ridicule. He did not apprehend what that hon. gentleman supposed was the fear of those who deprecated the danger, namely, that regiments would be brought into Palace-yard to overawe the proceedings of that House, but that danger of another kind would be the result; he meant the danger of patronage—he meant that danger which, although not so direct or immediate as the hon. gentleman imagined was the apprehension of those who opposed this measure, was still as likely, by slow degrees, to undermine the stability of our constitution. The noble lord said he should vote against the motion because he thought it unconstitutional, and that it was impossible the country could bear the establishment.

Sir *John Beresford* in explanation, stated, that without a military force to garrison our colonies, a fleet could never afford them any adequate protection and this he felt it his duty to urge, as the opinion of a naval officer.

Mr. *Stuart Wortley* thought that government was the best judge what degree of force ought to be maintained for the supply of our foreign garrisons. As to the foot-guards, they possessed a greater *esprit de corps* than any other part of the army, and should not therefore be sent out on that service. There was no occasion, however, for keeping up so large a force in Great Britain; it might be reduced full one-half without any danger whatever to the country, and there was no reason why the household troops, which were to be stationed at Windsor and London, should be increased. In times like these, it was necessary that the utmost economy should be adopted; the people had a right to demand it, and ministers should not disappoint their just and anxious expectations. He had expressed his opinion on this subject on a former night, and from the ill success his motion had then experienced, he should not again divide the House on any further proposition. Consistently with the vote he had then given, he could not however consent to receive the report of the committee.

Mr. *Wilberforce* said, that he felt himself called upon by the strongest sense of duty to oppose the measure before the House, not only upon financial, constitutional, and moral, but even upon military grounds. For the character of the army he declared the most grateful and ardent regard. He felt, indeed, the warmest attachment and admiration for that meritorious body, which had raised the country to the highest elevation, while it had served as the instrument of Providence for the deliverance of the world from the greatest danger by which it was ever menaced. But with all this feeling, he could not forbear to express that jealousy of a standing army, which our most distinguished constitutional writers had never ceased to inculcate. In expressing this jealousy, however, he meant not to offend, nor could he apprehend, that any offence would be felt by any part of our gallant warriors—so little, indeed, did he feel such an apprehension, that even in the presence of the distinguished hero, who had so long led our army to victory, he would not hesitate to express that jealousy. He acknowledged and admired the services rendered to our army by the illustrious commander in chief, and had, therefore, a high respect for that personage, but he believed his royal highness was too much of an Englishman to be offended by his jealousy of a standing army. With regard to the opinion of his right hon. friend (Mr. Grant), as to the means which existed for preserving our constitution, he concurred with that opinion to a great extent. He felt that our constitution derived considerable security from the diffusion of knowledge—from the influence of opinion and wealth—and from the general conviction of its own intrinsic merit. But then it was to be recollected, that the influence of the Crown had been most materially increased of late years, and that such influence was likely to derive great additional power from the existence of a standing army. He was not one of those who ever objected to the due reward and encouragement of a military spirit. He highly approved of the recent institution of an order of knighthood, and only lamented that the distinctions which that order conferred were not duly extended to the navy. He never, indeed, saw one of the badge of this order, that it did not seem to excite his gratitude by the natural association of some glorious achievement. Of the institution of the Military College also, he fully approved, because this seminary was calculated to furnish good officers, which, he understood from military men, it had usually been found most difficult to provide. In this seminary, indeed, he was assured that the best system of education prevailed. But still what a source of patronage did this institution afford? Yet the existence of such an institution considerably reduced the necessity for a standing army, because it would always serve to afford good officers, and privates could be had without material difficulty, whenever an army should be required. But he objected to the standing army at present proposed, from a consideration of its amount, and from a natural apprehension that as the army had perpetually been increased at the conclusion of every war in which the country had been engaged for the last century, that increase was still likely to go on, until we should become quite a military nation, and against any measure of this tendency he strongly protested. He also objected to this measure, because, he was one of those who thought that this country was always too ready to go to war, and the existence of a large standing army was but too likely to encourage that disposition. We had most successfully terminated the late war, and he was peculiarly grateful for the adjustment which had since been made, and especially for a certain part of that adjustment. But still he felt that this adjustment was calculated to excite serious apprehensions. For there was reason to fear, that the consequence of this adjustment would be to implicate this country rather too much in the affairs of all Europe. Such policy he deprecated, as much as he did some years ago the project for guaranteeing the territories of the grand seignor, as if the interest of England could be materially affected by the reduction of the Turkish dominions. Now, as to his moral objections to the measure before the House, he could not help expressing the gravest apprehension of the injury which the morals of the country were likely to receive from the prevalence of military habits. This was a consideration of magnitude, to which he trusted the House would duly attend. Again, he objected to this measure as unnecessary, especially if the power of the navy were adequately consulted. The navy was, if he might so express himself, his first love. It was, indeed, the branch of our service upon which it was peculiarly the disposition, the habit, and the interest of England mainly to depend; for the navy formed the best bulwark of our defence, while it had no tendency to endanger our constitution—[Hear, hear!]. Then as to his financial objections to this measure, it was exceptionable from the amount of expense which it was calculated to entail upon the country, and however great our military force, the security which the empire would derive from its existence would little avail, if the pressure which it imposed upon the resources of the people served to damp their spirit, or alienate their attachment. The resources of the country were not in a state to endure any additional burthens. Some diminution of the burthens which already bore upon it must, indeed, be removed, or its distress must become intolerable. Under such circumstances he could not accede to any measure calculated to aggravate those burthens, and especially to a measure so exceptionable as that under consideration.

Lord *Palmerston* said, he was glad the discussions upon the proposed establishments had gone to so great a length, not only because they would satisfy the country that that House was diligent in the discharge of its duty, but also because they had produced the effect of removing many of the objections which were urged at the commencement. Most of the hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House (he believed, indeed, he might say all), were now agreed, that 25,000 men were necessary for Ireland, at least under the present circumstances; and, with respect to our West Indian colonies, he apprehended there did not exist much difference of opinion, except as to the mode of securing them. It had been suggested by some, that it would be better to provide for their safety by stationing ships in those seas, but even on the principle of economy, he did not think it would be found advisable to pursue that course. Supposing the 3,000 men were deducted from the force now intended to be used in the West Indies, and that their place were supplied by two sail of the line, the latter would incur a charge of 130,000*l.*, which would be more expensive than the proposed number of troops, while, at the same time, it would be impossible that such a naval force could be equally adequate to the defence of those colonies. Nor was it merely as a question of finance that the military would be preferable to the maritime establishment. Looking at the arrangement with respect to the health of men in that climate, it would be found deserving the approbation of the House; for it should be remembered, that though by the system now adopted under the direction of the medical board, many of the evils attendant upon a long service on that station were obviated on board our ships, yet it was impossible to counteract them all. But the troops, when in garrison, were relieved from many unhealthy duties, from exposure to the sun, &c., by the co-operation of the black regiments, the latter being composed of men inured to the climate. It was desirable also, in the contemplation of a renewal of hostilities, that we should maintain a sufficient force there for the protection of our possessions. One or two ships of the line could not defend all the different islands: at the most they could be available only to a very limited degree; and supposing any of them to be captured, they could not be regained without great sacrifices. The same might be said of some other of our possessions, especially of Malta and the island of Corfu. With respect to Malta, every one knew how great an effort was required to reduce that strong position, and Corfu was surrendered by treaty. A noble lord, in speaking of the Mauritius, had stated, that the enemy did not maintain there a larger force than 2,000 men; the fact however was, that 3,500 had actually surrendered; and as to the military strength of that island, he did not think that the Abbé Raynal, to whom the noble lord so confidently referred, would be regarded as any great authority upon such points by that House. He was warranted in saying, therefore, with regard to our colonial possessions, that no one had yet succeeded in showing that any reduction of magnitude could be made in the amount of force to be employed for their protection.—He should next touch upon the home force; and he must observe, that he did not think sufficient attention had been paid to what his noble friend (lord Castlereagh) had advanced upon that subject on a former evening. His noble friend then showed what great deductions must be made from the gross amount estimated for the home station. Even assuming that the 3000 men which were to be kept up for reliefs were added to the 25,000, making in all 28,000, it would be found that the real disposable force did not amount to any thing like the number. It was admitted, that in order to provide sufficient reliefs for the troops stationed in foreign garrisons, it would be necessary to appropriate at least 7000 men. He wished the House to be aware that there were, at the present moment, serving abroad, above thirty regiments, some of which had been ten, and others even twenty years on those distant stations. That circumstance, however, arose entirely from the nature of the war in which we had been engaged, and which required us to strain every nerve of military exertion for its prosecution. The moment a regiment was fit to go abroad, instead of being able to send it out for the relief of those who had been so long serving in colonial garrisons, it was immediate dispatched to that station where the fate of Europe was to be decided; but as that necessity no longer existed, it was most desirable that those regiments should now be permitted to return home. If, then, the 7000 men, which he had mentioned, were taken from the 28,000, there would remain only 21,000, strictly applicable to the home service, and of those, seven thousand were to be cavalry. A further reduction also was created by the force necessary for the islands of Guernsey and Jersey, which amounted to about 2,500, whose services were most important on those stations, with respect to the revenue. That, then, would reduce the 21,000 to 18,500 for Great Britain, including both cavalry and infantry, and if the 7000 cavalry were deducted, there would remain only 11,500 infantry. Nor were those the only deductions, for they ought also to take into the calculation the non-effectives, the ordinary casualties, which must occur more or less in all establishments, and the usual proportion of sick who were not capable of undertaking active duty. But supposing the whole effective force to be 11,000 for home duty, could that be considered as too large? According to a return which he had that day laid upon the table of the House, it appeared, that at the present moment no less than 18,000 were actually employed in that very duty; and let the hon. gentlemen make what deductions they chose in the different stations where that duty was to be performed, he did not think they would be able to prove that 11,000 men were more than was necessary.—It had been urged that Ireland would be a source of assistance for reliefs, and in some respects that was true, because they might send out to Ireland weaker corps (though competent to perform all the military duties in Ireland) than could be sent out to foreign stations. But he was far from thinking that Ireland could afford any assistance to the extent which some hon. gentlemen seemed to anticipate. While on that branch of the subject, he wished to apologise for an error into which he had fallen on a former evening, in stating, that it was the intention of government to recall that part of the guards now serving in France. He had since been enabled to make more minute inquiries, and he could now inform the House, that the guards at present under the duke of Wellington would remain in France as long as the army remained there; and that, consequently, would reduce the guards at home to somewhere about 8000 men. It was not to be assumed, however, that they were to be kept stationary in the metropolis. They would certainly be considered equally as liable to be employed upon duty in any part of this country, or of Ireland, as the other troops of the line; and he differed therefore from those who stated that they would not be as available for service as the other troops. As to the composition of the guards, about which so much had been said, whoever had paid any attention to the events which had occurred in the peninsula, or to those which had taken place last year, must surely do them the justice to admit, that not only in what regarded complete efficiency in the field, but in all that related to internal organization, and to general regimental arrangements, it was impossible for any corps to exceed them. It should be remembered, also, that the household troops formed a sort of nucleus for any army which it might be necessary to raise at the commencement of a war, and that by always keeping three or four thousand effective men ready to send off upon any great emergency, the most important and beneficial consequences might ensue to the country. It was difficult to compare the amount of charge incurred by those troops with that which was required for troops of the line, because they were upon the old establishment of the army, and paid according to their rate, and not according to their effective number. But though the charge was somewhat higher than that of the line, he did not think the household troops were, to any considerable degree more expensive. Some little excess there undoubtedly was, though not to such an extent as deserved much consideration. With regard to the cavalry, it was a mistake to suppose that they had been augmented during the war, they were now lower than they were in 1814. During last year, indeed, they had been augmented for the purpose of going abroad, but even that augmentation fell considerably short of the previous reductions. With respect to what had passed in the House concerning the equipment of those troops, their jackets, their lace, their helmets, and their theatrical appearance, he should not feel it necessary to say much upon that point. He would only ask the hon. gentlemen who were so fond of indulging in their merriment upon the subject, whether they did not think, that at the battle of Waterloo they found the helmets a little more serviceable against the attacks of the French cuirassiers, than their cocked hats would have been? The real utility of the changes which had been introduced was admitted by all who were most competent to form an accurate judgment. In reply to an observation which had been made, he should state that the force he was then alluding to would not be confined merely to the service of the metropolis, neither would they be sent to scour the Downs of Sussex, in order to prevent smuggling; but there were other duties for which the life guards were as well adapted as any other kind of cavalry. With respect to the difference of expense between them and the other description of cavalry, it was extremely trifling. Taking the household troops at 1700, the estimated expense would be about 112,000*l.* and an equal number of dragoons would be about 85,000*l.*, so that there would be only a saving of 27,000*l.* Supposing, however, that those troops were to be reduced one half, as had been proposed, then the saving would not exceed 13,000*l.* per annum. He did not mean that such a sum as that, or even a smaller one, ought not to be saved, but he really did not consider the economical advantages so great that they should counterbalance those which would be derived from keeping up that description of force.—With respect to the constitutional point of this question, he could not but observe that the hon. gentlemen opposite had varied their ground of attack, so as to suit their own arguments. At one moment they talked of the constitutional jealousy with which parliament and the country ought to regard a standing army; but when they were attacked upon that ground and driven from it, then they turned round and exclaimed, "No, we do not object to it merely as a military force, but as giving a large patronage to ministers, and increasing the influence of the crown." The hon. member who spoke last, had even talked of his preference of a naval to a military force, as if he had forgotten, that on that view of the subject, patronage and influence might not be as successfully and as extensively exerted as in the army. He was gratified, however, to observe, that there seemed to be a cessation of those charges which had been so liberally indulged in it at the beginning of the discussion. There was no mention now of a deliberate intention on the part of ministers to subvert the constitution of the country. Those taunts were freely uttered at the outset, but they were not now repeated. He was glad of it, for indeed he did not believe that such a charge would be countenanced either by that House or by the country. For himself, he could not entertain such a suspicion of any statesman of the present day: and he spoke not only of those with whom he acted, but of the strongest of his political opponents. At the same time, he was far from wishing to treat lightly or inconsiderately the evils attendant upon a standing army. The history of those countries where standing armies had been allowed to usurp an ascendancy over the civil authorities, was a volume pregnant with instruction to every one. They might look at France, for example, and derive a lesson of eternal importance. But when they talked of the 12,000 prætorian bands, who, in ancient Rome, were potent enough to dispose of that empire according to their will and pleasure, it should be remembered, that that was the result of a number of predisposing causes which had no existence in England. Before the civil constitution of any country could be overturned by a standing army, the people of that country must be lamentably degenerate; they must be debased and enervated by all the worst excesses of an arbitrary and despotic government; their martial spirit must be extinguished; they must be brought to a state of political degradation, he might almost say, of political emasculation, such as few countries experience which have once known the blessings of liberty. And when they were reduced to that condition, it mattered but little by how many or how few soldiers their final ruin was accomplished. They were already fitted to bear the yoke, which their debasement prepared for their necks. He trusted, that whatever differences they might entertain about abstract questions of foreign or domestic policy, it would at least be allowed, by all parties, that we enjoyed the practical blessings of freedom in a greater degree than had ever been done by any other country, and he would presume to say, in a greater degree than even this country had ever enjoyed at any former period. He was not a little surprised, indeed, to hear the reign of queen Elizabeth referred to by the hon. gentlemen opposite, as a period from which we were to deduce our constitutional practices; to hear the whigs talk of those times with exultation when no standing armies existed. In his opinion, when a sovereign exercised such power as to send members of that House to prison, and advise them not to meddle with state affairs, it was of little consequence whether they had a standing army or not. With regard to the present case, he was quite satisfied that there was even in the very constitution of our army a sufficient protection for the constitution, and a sufficient check to prevent its being abased as a body. A large proportion of the officers, who commanded in it were identified by their property, their connexions, and general interests, with the civil prosperity of the state; and he was sure, that if it were possible for one half of the army to decide against the constitution, the other half would stand up for it. In point of fact, however, when they looked merely at the number of the troops proposed to be employed, with the nature of the service for which they were required, it was ridiculous to suppose that they carried with them any thing that could be considered as really dangerous to the constitution [Hear, hear!].

Sir *John Sebright* expressed his strong conviction, that the amount of the military force proposed to be kept up was not only unconstitutional, but unnecessary. If ever there was a period when it was unnecessary, this, he said, was that period. Since standing armies, that great curse of modern society, had been introduced, when was there a moment but the present when that of France might be said not to exist? As a member of the British parliament, he felt it his duty to protest against the measure.

Mr. *Tighe* animadverted on the proposed establishment of 25,000 men for Ireland. The people of that country, he said, neither were, nor had reason to be, satisfied with such a measure in the midst of profound external peace. If the state of Ireland was such as to require that unprecedented force, why had not a formal message from the Prince Regent set forth its necessity? Why was the House left to take it for granted, from the mere statement of the right hon. secretary for Ireland, that such an amount of force was absolutely necessary? Would not the Irish people ask, how their condition came to be such as to require 25,000 men in profound peace? Well he remembered the time when Ireland was able to defend itself, even when the fleets of France and Spain rode masters of the channel. In 1782, the whole establishment of Ireland was only 8000 men, and the greater part of them were fighting in America. Would they not ask us to restore to them the constitution of 1782? Adverting to the statements in the speech of the right hon. secretary, he would ask, what were the objects to be attained by keeping up so large an army in that part of the empire? Were tithes to be levied, were rents to be collected, by a military force? He would assert, that the southern countries of Ireland, Kilkenny, Kildare, and Wicklow, were now as tranquil as they had been for years past. The whole formed part of a great plan to render this a military country. Hence it was, that the black regiments in the West Indies, and even the Greek regiment in the Ionian islands, were to be disbanded, that these possessions might become pretences and depots for British troops. If, however, we affected to rival the armies of continental powers, we must sacrifice our commercial and naval greatness, and become a mere auxiliary in the wars of continental despots.

Lord *Milton* explained the nature of the quotations which he had made from the Abbé Raynal, the civil part of which had been mistaken for the political.

Mr. *Vesey Fitzgerald* could not suffer the speech of the hon. gentleman who had just sat down to pass without notice. He could not but complain of some of the topics that he had introduced, and the view that he had taken of the question before the House as it concerned Ireland, and the military establishment necessary to be maintained. He was persuaded that the hon. gentleman would not have made the statements which he had done, had he heard the speech of his right hon. friend near him (Mr. Peel). That speech still remained unanswered—and it was some satisfaction to him and to those who with him took the same views which his right hon. friend had done, that in the opinions that had been expressed that night, the hon. gentleman stood alone; he was as yet the only member who had said that the force proposed for Ireland was greater than was necessary for the public safety. Even those who would vote with the hon. gentleman that night, evaded giving that opinion. The hon. member represented his right hon. friend as having said, that the extent of that force was rendered necessary in Ireland by three causes; but he had so stated them, that it would appear as if his right hon. friend had contended, that those causes separately were productive of that necessity. It was on the combination of those causes, and on other circumstances, aggravated by their continuance for years, that his right hon. friend had founded his argument. Neither did he state, as has been imputed to him by the hon. gentleman, that the only way to remedy the evils existing in Ireland was, by maintaining in that island a large military establishment. Who had ever said (as the hon. gentleman had apostrophised), "that a military force was a remedy for political evils?" He would take leave however to tell him, that it might be a protection against political danger. In fact his right hon. friend had admitted and asserted, that there were many measures calculated to diminish the evils by which Ireland was afflicted, and to the distant but ultimate operation of some of them, he had sanguinely looked. He (Mr. F.) and many of those near him would go farther than his right hon. friend; but to whatever extent they might go, there was no one, except perhaps the hon. gentleman, who would contend, that those or any measures could be put into such operation at once, or that they could be expected to produce immediately such an effect, as to render the pressure of a large military force no longer expedient.

The hon. gentleman's statement of what had fallen from his right hon. friend had been in other respects equally erroneous; he asserted, that parliament had been called upon by him for a great extension of the military establishment in Ireland. Now, what his right hon. friend had said was, that the state of Ireland was such, as to require, not an extension of the existing force, but that a greater reduction than that of 17,000 men should be prevented. If it were an extension of force to reduce it to 25,000 effectives, the hon. gentleman was authorized in what he had said. If he judged from the hon. member's manner, he was uninformed of the nature or of the amount of the force in Ireland and now employed there. Did the hon. gentleman know what that force now consisted of? Or was he not equally mistaken in his historical account of the armies of former times? What was the representation that we had heard from him of the military force existing in the reign of king William? He had asserted that, "at that glorious era," the whole standing army was disbanded: "there was then some spirit of freedom in the breasts of Englishmen;" but the House would recollect, that that was the identical period at which a standing army first existed, at least at which it was first recognized by parliament. So far was the army from being disbanded at that time, it was then first voted by the House of Commons, and 10,000 troops were maintained in England, besides guards and garrisons—besides a force abroad, and a force in Ireland [Hear!]. In the very reign preceding, a legal objection was taken to a charge laid against an individual, who was accused of conspiring to attack the King's guards, because it was said, that the having guards was unconstitutional, and that the law knew not what the King's guards were. He was not surprized, however, at the hon. gentleman's inaccuracy in quoting what took place in England at that period, when he heard him asserting that Louis the 14th, "in the plenitude of his power," and the "romantic" king of Sweden, drew their swords at this time for the restoration of the exiled monarch of England. Charles the 12th undoubtedly commenced his martial achievements at an early age, but he apprehended that he could hardly have unsheathed his sword at the time the hon. gentleman stated [Hear, hear! and a laugh]. Twenty years had elapsed after that period before the intrigues of Sweden and France commenced (he alluded to the negociation of the baron de Goertz), and it was to accomplish the dethronement of the House of Hanover, and not of king William, that Alberoni prepared the projects which the hon. gentleman had anti-dated in this night's debate! [Hear, hear!]. But, take the time when he would, did he mean to contend, that at any one of those periods which he had illustrated, England was without a regular force, or Ireland either? He should not have adverted to historical errors such as these, had they not have been brought forward in such a triumphant tone, in contravention, too, of the statements of his right hon. friend, and had been received with such plausive assent by some of those around the hon. member [Hear!]. He had further declared, that a greater force was demanded for Ireland now than had ever been required before. Adverting to a former period of her history, he had said, that the whole force then existing in that country was composed of volunteers exclusively, and that there were no regular troops. This was another mistake. Of those days which saw her volunteer force arrayed, his country had a right to be proud; nor was the glory the less because it was bloodless. At the same time, although the whole of the regular troops were not retained, though Ireland trusted principally to her own patriotism for defence, and though the parliament of that country freely consented to every sacrifice that England required, yet a certain amount of regular force was still kept, and it did so happen that the only attempt at the invasion of Ireland during that war, was repelled by a part of that regular force. This, however, was not worth dwelling on.

Reverting to the declaration made by the hon. gentleman, that at no time antecedent to the present, was such a force kept up in Ireland as that now proposed, he would refer him to periods of the late war, when there was no danger of invasion, and little danger of any extraordinary disturbance of the public peace in that country, and yet when a much larger military establishment was maintained. He would refer him to 1806 and 1807, when those persons with whom the hon. gentleman was in the habit of acting, composed his majesty's government; and in doing so, he was not influenced by any motive of paltry or personal recrimination, but merely by feeling that the government of that time would be considered by the hon. gentleman as good authority, if by others they were not. In the years 1806 and 1807, when there was no danger of foreign invasion, and little danger of domestic disturbance, the regular troops in Ireland amounted to 30,000 men, besides the militia, volunteers, and a powerful yeomanry force. ("That was in time of war," from the Opposition benches.) True, that was in time of war. But those who reminded him that it was so, would hardly say that the force so placed in Ireland was entirely for military purposes, to be applied in operations against a foreign enemy, unless they could show (which he was persuaded they could not) that there was danger of invasion, or that the peace of the country was likely to be disturbed. The force at present contended to be necessary, was not the force which was considered necessary during the war.

He had before observed, that the hon. gentleman had referred to three points in the speech pronounced by his right hon. friend on a preceding night. He would advert shortly to these points; he had said shortly, for to dwell long upon them would be to do great injustice to an exposition of the state of Ireland, which had not been forgotten by any one who had heard it, and to which he begged to repeat, that no one either who had heard it had attempted a reply. His right hon. friend had ascribed the present state of Ireland to a combination of causes.—The non-residence of the landed proprietors, the incompetency of the magistracy [Hear, hear! from the opposition side]. Let not gentlemen suppose he meant to admit a general incompetency of that class of men in Ireland; but it was notorious, that there were many incompetent in ability,—that there were large districts where they were deficient in number; that in many places, above all in times of trouble and of danger, persons had been appointed—necessarily appointed—of a class from which they would not otherwise have been voluntarily chosen. He felt, perhaps, that to follow this branch of the subject would involve him and the House in too wide a field; but it was evident, that in a country where the popular mind had been so corrupted, and where so few years since an armed rebellion had raised its head,—in a country so circumstanced with respect to its resident gentry, and its magistracy, something more than ordinary means were necessary for insuring the public safety, and guarding, what would be not less interesting to those who heard him, the lives and properties of the well disposed and the loyal.

There was another point, upon which what had been said by his right hon. friend had been utterly distorted; he meant with regard to the practice of illicit distillation, that bane of the country and of the people, but of which the hon. gentleman seemed to think so lightly; and well he might—for of its causes and of its effects, and of the means which had been used to extinguish it, he seemed equally careless and misinformed. It was true, that they had been forced, particularly in the north of Ireland, to employ military detachments to suppress it. When it was recollected to what violation of the laws it led, the House would not be surprised or sorry to hear that recourse had been had to the strongest means. The hon. gentleman had declared, that in his part of Ireland illicit distillation did not prevail: it certainly did not to any extent in the county which he represented, nor in the county of Kilkenny. It would therefore not be necessary to employ the troops on that service in those counties, though he could tell the hon. gentleman that, of which he seemed also unapprized, in the county of Kilkenny where he resided, though not believed very lately, there were other calls for the services of those troops. At the same time, as to illicit distillation, he could have wished that the hon. gentleman had attended to the representations of other members who were acquainted with other parts of Ireland. Many of them also from the south, who with a liberality and a manliness, which he thought it his duty warmly to acknowledge, had declared their readiness to support the strongest measures to put down a practice so fatal wherever it prevailed. He was sorry the hon. gentleman had not heard the sentiments of the right hon. baronet near him (sir John Newport), because he knew the weight they would have with him. Still more, he wished he had heard the speech, in which he had immediately followed his right hon. friend in the debate of a former night, for he would have heard from that right hon. baronet his most unequivocal testimony to the accuracy of the statements which his right hon. friend had made, and he would have heard him say further, the military force demanded for Ireland was not greater than the necessity required.

To return, however, for a single moment, to the subject of illicit distillation; he could inform the House, that it had so extended, that the act imposing penalties on the vicinage had been revived and enforced. It was now in force in more than two-thirds of the counties in Ireland, and he confessed that there was no justification for such a law, but the impossibility of suppressing it by any other means. The hon. gentleman had treated the whole subject with very unsuitable levity. Could he affect to consider it merely as a question of revenue? or did any man believe that to prevent the use of "unsanctified" spirits was the sole motive which had induced the legislature to endeavour to guard by such severities against the prevalence of a mischief than which nothing could be more destructive to the community [Hear!].

It had been asserted by the hon. gentleman, that the disturbances in Ireland were confined to a few districts. He hoped certainly that the recent execution of those laws with which the government was invested, had produced a salutary effect; but the spirit of combination had not subsided, the spirit of outrage was still abroad, and it was at this time that it was proposed to strip the country of the whole of its regular force. The hon. gentleman had told the House, "that some melancholy events had occurred, and that one of those melancholy events had been the murder of a magistrate." It had indeed. It was on the return of that unfortunate gentleman from discharging his duty as a magistrate at Clonmel,—it was the punishment of his conduct as an active and intrepid assertor of the laws—it was perpetrated in the open day, and marked by circumstances of combination amongst the lower orders of the people which it was painful for him to dwell on. But it was in one of those counties where the hon. gentleman believed no military force was necessary. At the special commission which followed the death of that most active and respectable man, whose loss was no less to be deplored by the public, than by the private friends who loved him [Hear, hear!]. Fourteen persons were capitally convicted—in a county in which the hon. gentleman had contended that no military force was necessary—among them were some who were leaders of the violence by which the district had been disgraced. Probably the hon. gentleman did not know of what crime those men were convicted—they were convicted of having been forward in an attack made by about 200 persons upon one of his majesty's barracks, upon a house, he meant to say, which had been taken as a barrack for the occupation of the king's troops in a disturbed part of the country [Hear, hear!]. It was therefore marked for destruction—they did destroy it—and fourteen of them were convicted and suffered for the crime. He would appeal to those who knew those facts (there were several present who knew them personally),—he would call on one particularly whom he had in his eye, (who was now sitting near the hon. gentleman)—he would call on him to state whether that county was in a situation in which it would be advisable, in which it would be safe, to attend to the hon. gentleman's recommendations, and to dispense with the presence of a regular military force [Hear!]. In another and a neighbouring county also, serious affrays had taken place and several lives had been lost.

Were these not sufficient facts to justify —not an extension of the military force in Ireland, but a proposition not to reduce it under that amount which the security and tranquillity of that country required? At that late period of the night he would keep clear of all those general topics of policy on which the hon. gentleman had so amply dilated; and would confine himself to a few observations on the declaration made by some hon. members, that if the state of Ireland was such as it had been represented to be, it was a matter of grave charge against his majesty's government that it had not sooner been brought under the consideration of parliament. It had even been insinuated that his right hon. friend had kept the knowledge of this state in reserve, until it became necessary to bring it forward in order to induce parliament to vote the force required. But did not the House bear in mind that in the session before last, and in the last sessions, the situation of Ireland had been distinctly represented to them by his majesty's government, for the express purpose of procuring the re-enactment of the most severe laws ever known in the British realms? In that application for coercive measures, his majesty's government had been supported not only by the majority of the House, but by the hon. gentlemen opposite, who, with a liberality and manliness that did them great credit, had admitted that less could not be asked with a view to secure the tranquillity of Ireland.

If, therefore, a motion should be made in any quarter for an inquiry into the state of Ireland, at least he trusted, that no one would allege that this was the first occasion on which the grounds on which the vote was justified were submitted to parliament, or that the House was unprepared for the statement which his right hon. friend had made [Hear, hear!].—He could not in this stage offer any thing further; he perceived the House was exhausted, and he was exhausted also [Hear, hear!].

Mr. *F. Prittie* trusted, that if the disturbances ceased in Ireland, which there was reason to hope would be the case, a considerable reduction would be made in the establishment.

Colonel *Vereker* supported the necessity of a large military force in Ireland. 4,000 regular troops were not found to be too many to preserve tranquillity in the county of Limerick; 25,000 therefore could not, he thought, be considered as more than sufficient for the whole island.

The report was then brought up and read. On the question, that the resolution be read a second time, Mr. Wynn moved, as an amendment, to leave out all the words after the word "that," for the purpose of substituting the words "the resolution be re-committed." On this amendment the House divided:

For the amendment 122
Against it 190
Majority .... —— 68

The Resolution was then read a second time and agreed to.

List of the Minority.

Abercrombie, hon. J.
Acland, sir T.
Althorp, viscount
Arkwright, Rd.
Atherley, A.
Babington, Tho.
Bankes, Henry
Beach, M. H.
Bennet, hon. H.
Birch, Joseph
Boughey, sir J. F.
Brand, hon. T.
Brougham, H.
Browne, Dom.
Buller, J.
Burrell, hon. P. D.
Burrell, Walter
Byng, George
Campbell, hon. J.
Campbell, Gen.
Cavendish, lord G.
Cavendish, hon. H.
Cavendish, hon. C.
Cochrane, lord
Caulfield, hon. H.
Chaloner, Robert
Cocks, hon. J. S.
Cocks, James
Dickenson, W.
Duncannon, visc.
Dundas, hon. L.
Dundas, Charles
Ebrington, viscount
Elliott, right hon. W.
Ellison, C.
Fazakerly, J. N.
Fellowes, W. H.
Fergusson, sir R. C.
Finlay, Kirkman
Fitzgerald, lord W.
Fitzroy, lord J.
Frank, F.
Fremantle, Wm.
Gordon, R.
Grenfell, Pascoe
Guise, sir W.
Hamilton, sir H. D.
Heathcote, sir G.
Hornby, E.
Horner, Francis
Howard, hon. W.
Jervoise, J. J.
Keck, G. A. L.
Knox, T.
Langton, W. G.
Lefevre, C. Shaw
Lemon, sir W.
Lloyd, J. M.
Lester, B. L.
Lyttelton, hon. W. H.
Macdonald, James
Mackintosh, sir J.
Madocks, Wm. A.
Markham, admiral
Martin, John
Milton, visc.
Methuen, P. C.
Mills, Charles
Monck, sir C.
Mordaunt, sir C.
Moore, P.
Morland, S. B.
Morpeth, viscount
Neville, hon. R.
Newman, R. W.
North, Dudley
Nugent, lord
Osbaldeston, G.
Osborne, lord F.
Ossulston, lord
Palmer, Charles
Peirse, H.
Philips, George
Piggott, sir A.
Ponsonby, rt. hon. G.
Ponsonby, hon. F. C.
Portman, E. B.
Powlett, hon. W. V.
Prittie, hon. F. A.
Protheroe, E.
Pym, Francis
Rashleigh, Wm.
Ramsden, J. C.
Rancliffe, lord
Ridley, sir M. W.
Romilly, sir S.
Rowley, sir W.
Russell, lord W.
Russell, lord G. W.
Russell, R. G.
Scudamore, R.
Sebright, sir J.
Sharpe, R.
Smith, John
Smith, Abel
Smith, William
Smyth, J. H.
Stanley, lord
Tierney, rt. hon. G.
Tighe, Wm.
Townshend, lord J.
Tremayne, J. H.
Waldegrave, hon. capt.
Walpole, hon. G.
Western, C. C.
Wharton, John
Wilberforce, W.
Wilkins, Walter
Williams, sir R.
Wright, J. A.
Wynn, sir W. W.
Wynn, C. W.

TELLERS.

Wortley, J. A. S.
Calcraft, John

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Monday, March 11.

PETITIONS RESPECTING THE PROPERTY TAX.] Viscount *Melville* presented a petition from the county of Edinburgh on the subject of the property tax, and praying, that if the continuation of the measure should be determined upon by the legislature, care might be taken to introduce such modifications therein as would afford relief to tenants and occupiers of land from the injurious burthen of the present provisions of the act.

The Duke of *Montrose* presented a petition, which his grace said, he knew to be signed by many respectable persons, some of them of considerable property, from Glasgow. The petition contained some excellent sentiments, which were well expressed, and he wished it to be read.—The petition was accordingly read, and stated, that the petitioners had no objection to the continuance of the property tax in order to wind up the war expenditure, and they deprecated the clamour which had been raised by those who petitioned their lordships against the tax, before their lordships could have had an opportunity of examining whether there was not a necessity for it. If so large a sum as six millions must be raised, the property tax was, they thought, the most unobjectionable mode.

The Earl of *Rosslyn* presented a petition from one of the Scotch counties against the property and malt taxes, and praying that in case the property tax should be re-enacted, some relief against its pressure might be granted in favour of the agricultural interest.

Lord *Holland* observed, that as the people of some parts of Scotland appeared to be so much enamoured of the property tax, he trusted, if such an odious and detestable measure was to be imposed in time of peace, means would be found, that it might be equally paid by the people of Scotland; he having been informed, that in some parts of Scotland, and particularly in Glasgow, the tax had fallen with a comparatively light pressure, and had produced but little.

The Duke of *Montrose* said, the noble lord was mis-informed, as the tax had been as rigorously collected in Scotland as in England.

Lord *Holland* contended, that he had good information upon the subject, and that it was impossible the property tax could have been equally levied in Glasgow, when it produced very little more than the house tax.

Viscount *Melville* maintained, that the property tax, as well as the assessed taxes, were as rigorously collected in all parts of Scotland, as in any part of England, and with respect to its producing in Glasgow little more than the house tax, the fact might be so, but he heard a similar observation applied also to places in England.

Earl *Grey* said, the fact was, that though in the North of England, and in some parts of Scotland, particularly Berwickshire, the property tax might be rigorously collected, yet in other parts of Scotland, as well also as in some parts of England, the tax was not collected according to law. In those parts of Scotland particularly, the income of the tenant was not estimated according to the directions, but they had a rule of their own, which was not a rule complying with the directions of the act. If it was really intended to continue this tax, so odious and detestable to the people of England, in a time of peace, there must be an inquiry as to the different modes of collecting it; he being satisfied, that it had hitherto pressed with most disproportionate weight in different parts of the island, from the variations in the mode of collection.

The petitions were ordered to lie on the table.

PROXIES.] Lord *Kenyon*, adverting to the motion of a noble lord for submitting a question relative to proxies to a committee of privileges, suggested that it might be advisable to submit another question relative to proxies to the same committee. It had been contended, that the majority of peers present on any occasion might prevent proxies being received at all, if they chose. Now, he conceived that the right of voting by proxy was inherent in the peerage; and if so, the exercise of that right could not be legally prevented by any majority present.

Lord *Holland* said, that the object of his motion was merely to have it decided whether proxies held under wrong titles could be used in voting. He himself had hardly formed any opinion on the point. But the noble lord's question was entirely different from his, and if the noble lord wished to have it decided, he might make a motion for that purpose. It might be desirable to have that settled, but it was quite distinct from his question, except that it related to proxies. One of the characters in Shakspeare's plays said, that there was a river in Macedon, and there was also, moreover, a river in Monmouth, and that there were salmons in both. The noble lord's similitude was of the same description. There were proxies in both questions, but he did not know why he should include in his motion the noble lord's question any more than a question as to what ought to be done in case of failure of the executive government, which was not at present settled by act of parliament.

The *Lord Chancellor* said, that the questions were distinct, and that his noble friend had better, at a proper opportunity, submit a separate motion on the subject, if he thought proper.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, March 11.

PETITIONS AGAINST THE PROPERTY TAX.] Petitions respecting the property tax were presented from the land-owners and farmers of Princes Risborough, the electors of Cricklade, the occupiers of land near Battle and Rye, the mayor, &c. of Devizes, the freeholders of Stirling, the inhabitants of Poole, Church Stretton, Glendale Ward, Bridport, Folkingham, Minchinhampton, Colyton, Barnard Castle, Sedgefield, St. Botolph without Aldgate, New Brentford, Hackney, St. Pancras, East Dereham, Launditch, Christchurch Surrey, Wellingborough, Kettering, Croydon, St. Mary Newington, the ward of Queenhithe London, Belper, Ashborne, Elloughton, Brough and Waulby, Addingham, Bridlington, Sheffield, Totnes, St. Nicholas Deptford, Leicester, Farnham Royal, and Howden; the freeholders of Ayr, Middlesex, Edinburgh, and Gwydir; the merchants, &c. of Glasgow; the farmers and land occupiers of Berse, Kincardine, &c. On presenting the petition from Leicester,

Lord *Rancliffe* was anxious to give some explanation respecting what he had stated on a former evening, with regard to the conduct of the mayor of Leicester. He had then said, that the mayor refused to call a meeting on the requisition of several respectable inhabitants of Leicester, to take into consideration the propriety of a continuance of the property tax; but he had since received a letter from one of the gentlemen who signed the requisition and waited on the mayor, explaining the reasons of his refusal in a manner which appeared quite satisfactory, and informing him that the mayor had since complied with a requisition free from the objections to which the first was liable.

Mr. *Lee Keck* expressed his gratitude to the noble lord for the candour he had shown in making this acknowledgment. The person alluded to he was satisfied was the last man in the world who would let any thing like party spirit stand in the way of the discharge of his public duty. The fact was, had he complied with the first requisition to call a meeting to "express a decided disapprobation of the renewal, at this time, of war taxes," he would have been guilty of a gross dereliction of public duty. He would call on the noble lord to say if the correspondent from Leicester had not written him to that effect. He would call on the hon. and learned gentleman (Mr. Brougham), who also spoke on the night in question against the mayor of Leicester, and beg of him that he would be good enough, in matters of this kind, first to investigate and then to accuse, if after an investigation he should think it proper to do so. But the hon. member for Taunton (Mr. Baring) had even improved upon the noble lord and the learned gentleman, by imputing to the gentleman in question the malignity of political motives, from which any man who knew him would at once acquit him. He thought there was something unfair in thus bringing forward any man who had not the means of justifying himself. He should like to know by what right they could arraign in this manner the conduct of any man without his being heard. Such accusations could only have the most injurious effects on the public service; for even the strongest acknowledgments, after the discovery of the error, could hardly be considered a reparation to the injured individual.

Lord *Rancliffe* was very ready to exculpate the mayor of Leicester from any thing like political partiality; but at the same time he considered it also his duty to exculpate the hon. and learned gentleman who had merely spoken upon his statement. He had misrepresented a part, but not the whole of the transaction; for the requisition had not been complied with, and the meeting did not take place.

Mr. *M. A. Taylor* thought the noble lord's explanation satisfactory, as it was only from what he had stated that his hon. and learned friend had made his remarks; and observed, that a charge against his hon. and learned friend ought not to have been made in his absence.

Mr. *Lambton* also lamented that the charge was not postponed till Mr. Brougham was present; but what that hon. and learned member said proceeded on the noble lord's statement respecting the mayor. That statement justified the remarks upon it, but that statement being inaccurate, the noble lord candidly took the first opportunity of setting himself right with the House. As to the hon. and learned member, no fault attached to him.

Mr. *Bennet* observed, that so far from thinking his hon. and learned friend's remarks incorrect or censurable in any way, he should have made similar observations, had not his hon. and learned friend's speech made them unnecessary.

Sir *C. Monck* maintained, that the statement justified the remarks, and that it would have been more correct to complain of an hon. and learned member in his presence.

Mr. *Lee Keck* begged to explain, that he did not bring on this conversation; and that knowing the mayor of Leicester had been hardly used, he could not listen to the noble lord's counter-statement, without expressing his feelings on the subject.

Sir *Gilbert Heathcote* observed, that the noble lord had made all possible reparation in his power, and that an hon. and learned member ought not to have been made the object of a charge when he was not in the House.

Mr. *W. Dundas* replied, that no charge had been preferred, that the hon. member near him had only vindicated an innocent man, the mayor of Leicester; and he trusted in future, that public men who had not the opportunity of defending themselves on the spot, would not be made the objects of complaints and charges on light grounds.

Mr. *Methuen* thought it was due to the hon. and learned member, whose conduct had been condemned, to wait till such member was in his place.

Mr. *Vyse* took the occasion to say, that he could not support the property tax, even though it were modified; for he was persuaded that if it were adopted with those modifications, it would be a permanent tax.

Lord *Althorpe*, on presenting the petition from the borough of Wellingborough, in Northamptonshire, against the property tax, and praying for a strict attention to economy, said, he was particularly instructed to support that part of the prayer of the petition which referred to the pledges of economy given in the Speech from the throne at the opening of the session. He therefore invited the House to the most strict and rigid system of economy, as the only means of saving the country. He was aware that it might not be possible to satisfy the wishes of the people, groaning beneath their burthens, by any practicable reduction that was consistent with the honour and safety of the nation; but he was convinced, at the same time, that great savings might be made, and that it was the duty of the House to carry them immediately into execution. In the civil departments great savings might be made, not only in sinecures, some of which, he believed, ministers themselves were pledged to abolish, but in useless offices, by which he meant those that did not conduce to the public service, or in which there was not adequate business for all those employed. In some offices, for instance, what was now executed by two might be intrusted to one, and in others an establishment of three might be reduced to two. He would not point out those particular departments to which this recommendation might apply, as he thought his majesty's ministers, from their knowledge of the business distributed among all the offices, were the best judges where a reduction might most safely be made; but he could not help pointing out to their consideration the boards of the treasury and the admiralty, as subjects where more economy might be practised. There were at present six lords of the treasury; the first lord of the treasury, the chancellors of the exchequer for Great Britain and for Ireland, and three junior members. He would propose that two of the junior lords should be dispensed with, and that the whole duty should be performed by the three who were necessarily members of the board, and only one junior lord. A similar reduction might take place in the admiralty board, where, as in the treasury, there were at present six members, four of whom could execute the whole of the duty, and thereby allow to the country the saving of the salaries of two junior, or, as they were commonly called, lay lords.

Lord *Folkstone* said, he had a question to ask of his majesty's ministers, concerning their intention with regard to the abolition or continuance of the office of third secretary of state. This office had been created on pretence of the accumulation of business during the war. The creation of it was contrary to act of parliament, and in direct violation of the provisions of Mr. Burke's bill. He would ask, therefore, if it was intended to abolish it, or if the noble lord's "intermediate state" between peace and war was to be urged as a justification or a reason for perpetuating this burthen upon the country?

Lord *Castlereagh*, in answer to the noble lord's question, stated, that there was no intention on the part of the government to abolish the office alluded to, but there were certain economical arrangements about to be made concerning it, which he would soon have the honour of laying before parliament.

Mr. *Preston* asked whether his majesty's ministers would have the temerity to bring before the House the question, whether the profits of all the industry of the country were adequate to pay the taxes which were imposed?

Mr. *Finlay* presented two petitions from Glasgow, one against the property tax, and the other praying that it might continue for the two years, as proposed, under certain modifications. The hon. member bore testimony to the respectability of the merchants and manufacturers of the city of Glasgow, who subscribed and instructed him to support the latter petition. The disinterested nature of their principles was sufficiently demonstrated by their conduct in offering to support a burthen which the other parts of the empire were so anxious to throw off. They were all, he believed, liable to pay the tax to which they were so favourable, while he was free to confess that the other petition with which he was intrusted, was subscribed by persons, many of whom were not directly liable. He did not mean, by this description of the petitioners, to say that their prayer was irrelevant, or that, because they did not pay directly, they were without any interest in wishing its abolition. In his own judgment, they were liable to pay a tax which affected their employers, and he would rather support them than the other petitioners. Adverting to the disclosures which the income tax compelled merchants to make, as one of the reasons why it should be abolished, he said, that he by no means thought the chancellor of the exchequer had answered that objection to his measure, by saying, that those engaged in trade might make all disclosures necessary for the purpose of equitable assessment, without showing the actual state of their affairs upon the whole, by laying the profits of the different branches of their concerns before different commissioners. This course, if it were adopted, the hon. member thought, would, in most cases, be injurious, as it often happened that a loss was incurred in one part of a business, while the only profit was reaped in another, which thus might be assessed for the whole of its amount, without allowing a deduction for the loss upon the whole balance. The difficulty of obtaining the proper deductions was a universal subject of complaint. He had been applied to by a poor woman, in very distressful circumstances, requesting his interference for relief with the commissioners. She was the proprietor of a house of twelve pounds per annum, which was the greater part of her income. For this sum she had been assessed; and though she made repeated applications to the commissioners to have the deductions which the act authorized in cases like hers, she could obtain no redress, from some misapprehension of the meaning of the act on the part of those who were appointed to carry it into execution. She was obliged to pay for five years, and had contributed out of this poor pittance six pounds to government before her case was attended to.

Mr. *Bennet* said, that the same complaint to which he had alluded on a former night, of persons having their affairs exposed by the negligence of the collectors of the income-tax, existed in a still greater degree in the town of Shrewsbury, where the amount of their returns were actually circulated about the town in printed bills. The right hon. the chancellor of the exchequer had stated, that this evil had been remedied, but he had to assure him that it was in full force at Shrewsbury a very short time back. He trusted, if the income tax were again inflicted on us, that means would be taken to prevent the recurrence of this enormous abuse.

Mr. *Brougham*, referring to his former statement about the returns under the income tax, said, that several other instances of the publicity given to the schedules containing accounts of the state of people's trade or fortunes had come to his knowledge. One of the districts where they were sold was in the immediate neighbourhood of London, another about ten miles from it, where the returns were systematically exposed to sale as waste paper for the benefit of the surveyor and inspector. He had heard this circumstance from one of the commissioners, who expressed his abhorrence of the base transaction, and who declared that he would no longer act as commissioner, though the tax were re-imposed. The commissioners were not to be blamed for these transactions; they performed a gratuitous and a very revolting duty. The persons who exposed the papers containing the state of the private affairs of individuals to public sale were the inspectors and surveyors. Of the conduct of these officers in performing this unworthy act, for the purpose of a little paltry gain of a few shillings, he would not trust himself with expressing his opinion, lest it should be too strong for the decency and decorum of parliamentary usage; but he would say, that if, in five instances which had been mentioned, such sales had been made, no reliance could be placed upon professions or oaths of secrecy. While he was in possession of the House, he would take the opportunity of replying to a charge made against him by the member for Leicester in his absence. This was an extraordinary charge—extraordinary in two respects, as being made in his absence, and as being totally groundless and unfounded. He did not call the charge totally unfounded unadvisedly, or without due consideration, and he would show why. He was uncertain if the hon. member who made it was present when the speech on which he commented was delivered by him. He would now state the circumstances for his information if he was absent, and would recall them to his memory if he was in his place at the time. A noble friend of his (lord Rancliffe) stated that the mayor of Leicester had refused to obey a requisition for calling a meeting to petition on the subject of the property tax, and added some circumstances with regard to his motives and conduct on which he had been misinformed. He immediately left the house. An hon. friend of his (Mr. Babington) rose to explain the conduct and views of the worthy magistrate, and did so to the complete justification of the mayor, and the satisfaction of the House. He (Mr. Brougham), as his noble friend was gone, rose to express his satisfaction at the statement given; and this was called his charge against the worthy mayor—this was the allegation he brought against him —this was the injustice he had committed, for which he was to be arraigned in his absence, and held up as making a wanton and gratuitous attack upon a blameless character. He would now repeat what he then said, that the objection of the worthy mayor to a compliance with the requisition savoured more of the nice distinctions which generally occurred among people of the profession to which he himself (Mr. Brougham) might be supposed partial, than of the plain sense and maxims generally followed by those of his own class in society. He (Mr. Brougham) had, in fact, joined in the approbation bestowed on the conduct of the mayor of Leicester; he admitted then, as now, after further inquiry, that it was perfectly blameless. He hoped the House would excuse the liberty he had taken in forcing a personal matter upon its attention: he had only done so in self-defence, in reply to a grave charge made during his absence. It might happen, on some future occasion, that he should be guilty of an error, but he trusted that censures would be spared until that occasion arrived. If he had overstated what had fallen from the hon. member, the fault was not his, but of the individual who had made the charge in the absence of the person accused.

Mr. *Lee Keck* said, that he might have been mistaken as to the tenor of the hon. and learned gentleman's observations; but if he had, it was in common with some of the publications in which the proceedings of the House appeared. The fact was, that the remarks of which he had complained had reached Leicester, and had excited a strong and painful sensation, not only in the mind of the worthy chief magistrate, but of those officers by whom he was surrounded and assisted. It was true that the discussion on the former day had not originated with the hon. gentleman, but with a noble lord who was not present when the hon. and learned gentleman spoke; but the mayor of Leicester had been for some time writhing under the unfounded imputations cast upon him; and if he (Mr. K.) had not spoken in his vindication, the consequence would have been, that that most respectable magistrate must still have continued to suffer. What had that night passed would no doubt give him much satisfaction, since it showed that all parties now admitted the correctness of his conduct. The House would do him (Mr. K.) the justice to believe, that he was not forward in making observations of a personal nature; but he had felt it his duty to make the remarks now the subject of complaint, in consequence of communications he had received from the country. He could assure the hon. and learned gentleman, that whatever might be his opinion of the conduct of the mayor of Leicester, those who were more immediately interested, were convinced that he had exercised a wise discretion.

Mr. *Blake* could not help observing, that the hon. member for Leicestershire was rather hardly dealt by, and if he were permitted to advise that hon. member, under similar circumstances, it would be to pursue the very same course he had adopted that night in defence of the mayor of Leicester. He entreated the House to call to its recollection the facts of the case. The noble lord with whom the subject had originated on a former night, made a statement on the authority of a private communication; on the authority of that statement the hon. and learned member commented, with his usual warmth of eloquence, and his observations were such as of course to hurt the feelings of an injured individual. The noble lord who made that statement on a former night, with a candour which did him infinite honour, came forward to-night, to avow his error, and then the hon. member for Leicestershire referred to what fell from the hon. and learned member, as the consequence of that error, and because the hon. and learned member happened not to have been present, the hon. member was accused of having brought forward a charge at a time when he was absent. Surely it must be manifest, that it was not the hon. member, but the noble lord with whom the selection of the time was; and if the hon. member had omitted to use that opportunity, he would have grossly derelicted the duty which he owed to his absent friend, and would have omitted to use the only opportunity which could regularly have offered for that purpose.

Mr. *Brougham* defended himself against the charge of having commented with his usual warmth on the subject introduced by his noble friend. He had only expressed his satisfaction at the explanation which had been given.

Mr. *Blake* replied, that the noble lord in the absence of the hon. and learned member had stated expressly, that he by his former erroneous statement, had induced the hon. and learned member to express himself as he had done.

Lord *Rancliffe* said, that he did not induce his hon. and learned friend to make any comment whatever. His charge against the mayor of Leicester was, that that magistrate had refused to comply with the requisition of several electors of that borough to convene a meeting with a view to petition against the income tax, and that charge was founded. But yet, from subsequent explanation, he was not now disposed to condemn the conduct of this magistrate, although he did not concur with him as to the grounds of his refusal of the first requisition.

Sir *George Clerke*, on presenting the petition from the freeholders, justices of the peace, commissioners of supply, and heritors of the county of Edinburgh, expressed his satisfaction to find that his sentiments with regard to the property tax concurred with those of his constituents. For at this meeting which was originally called to petition against the property tax, resolutions were adopted approving of that tax, with certain modifications respecting agriculture, as a better plan for raising the supplies than to resort to a loan, which would serve to render it more difficult for landholders to obtain pecuniary accommodation. The petitioners further prayed, that some allowance should be made to those landowners who had not been able to obtain any rent. Upon this point, he was glad to hear what had fallen from the chancellor of the exchequer on a former evening, because that showed the disposition of government to grant every reasonable allowance to the landlord who had received no rent, and to the agriculturist who had had no profit. With such modifications, he had no doubt that the property tax would be found the best plan of finance that could be devised under existing circumstances.

Mr. *Abercrombie* thought it necessary to state what had come to his knowledge with respect to the meeting, from which this petition was presented, and which the hon. baronet professed himself so happy to think concurred with him in opinion. This meeting of the county of Mid-Lothian consisted, in fact, of only 87 or 89 persons. It was not a meeting specially convened by the sheriff, but held at the quarter sessions; therefore, if the hon. baronet had no more constituents than those which attended this meeting, he must at the next election find himself, to say the least, rather hard run. Yet the petition in the hands of the hon. baronet was carried only by a majority of three or four. When a petition for the unqualified repeal of the income tax was proposed, the previous question was moved by that gallant officer lord Dalhousie, and on this question being carried, an hon. gentleman brought forward certain resolutions, which formed the bases of this petition. But, after all, this petition did not support the opinion of the hon. baronet. For if he was not mistaken the petitioners took special care to pray that if the property tax were renewed, they themselves should be exempted. This meeting composed, as he understood, of about 89 landholders, did not appear to be very candid; for according to the language of their petition, they distinctly say—"The property tax is extremely unjust and unequal, but yet you may impose it on others if you relieve us from its operation." Therefore the difference between the petition in the hands of the hon. baronet, and that of others on the table, was not as to the character or equity of the tax, but as to the view of the petitioners, the gentlemen seeking only to relieve themselves from its pressure, while other petitioners sought to relieve the country at large.

The petition was then read. It pronounced the property tax unjust and unfair in its principle as it regarded the agricultural interests, and prayed, if any bill were brought into parliament upon the same subject again, that modifications would be adopted, which would impose a tax not upon nominal, but upon real profits.

Sir *G. Clerke* explained, that all he had stated was, that, properly modified, the property tax would be a great relief to the agricultural distresses. He referred to a minute of the proceedings at the meeting, which had been transmitted to him, to show that it was there the prevailing sentiment that a loan would be most injurious to the landed interest.

Mr. *Abercrombie* put it to the House, whether the petition as read, did not verify his observations. It was, in fact, against the property tax, unless it were made no tax as applied to the individuals who had signed it.

Mr. *Finlay* remarked, that the objection to a loan in the country was, that it would depress the funds, and therefore, the best mode of giving satisfaction to the agriculturist was, to abandon the property tax, the effect of which would be an immediate elevation of the funds.

Mr. *Thompson* remarked, that this was decidedly a petition against the income tax of 1815 and 1816, describing the evil effects which its existence had produced. With respect to pecuniary accommodations to landlords and tenants, the country banks, however well disposed, would not lend any money to either landlords or tenants, and the money of those banks was no doubt in the funds. Thus government must see the facility of obtaining a loan; and the property tax being removed, the country bankers would lend with more confidence to their country connexions. Thus the public and individuals might obtain relief by a measure to which he trusted that the country would urge ministers to accede.

The several petitions were ordered to lie on the table.

Mr. *Grenfell* said, he thought it necessary, in consequence of what had fallen from the hon. gentleman (Mr. Thompson) to ask the chancellor of the exchequer, whether in the event of the rejection of the property tax, he proposed to borrow money in the ordinary way, or to resort to the sinking fund, under that clause in the 26th of the king, which was commonly called Mr. Fox's clause, and thus make the commissioners for the redemption of the public debt the contractors for the loan?

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* replied, that he could not allow himself to anticipate such an event as the hon. gentleman stated. He hoped, therefore, that there would be no necessity of resorting to either of the alterations alluded to, but should the necessity arise, it would be then time enough for him to state the line of policy which he proposed to pursue for supplying the public exigencies. He requested the House, however, to recollect that last year, when it was proposed to repeal the property tax, the funds had fallen considerably.

Sir *John Newport* inquired whether the debt of one million to Portugal, for which we were paying 6 per cent. interest, had been forgotten, or whether it was to be included in the miscellaneous services.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* was happy to be able to assure the right hon. baronet, that a considerable portion of the commissariat debt of Portugal had been paid out of the supplies of last year, and that the whole was in a fair course of liquidation by the judicious arrangements made.

Mr. *Baring* observed, that the raising money by loan or by exchequer bills must be productive of pretty similar effects. The people, when they heard from so weighty an authority as the chancellor of the exchequer, that by dispensing with a loan great advantages must accrue to the money market, naturally placed implicit confidence in such a declaration. His own opinion certainly was, that a direct loan, the interest of which should be charged upon the sinking fund, was the most eligible mode of meeting the financial difficulties of the country.

Mr. *Tierney* wished to know when it was the intention of the right hon. gentleman to bring forward the question of the property tax.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* replied, that the bringing forward that measure would necessarily depend upon the course which public business might take during the present week. He had great doubts, however, whether it could be brought forward so early as Wednesday, and he thought Friday the more likely day.

Mr. *Tierney* said it would be a material convenience to the House if the right hon. gentleman could name any day when he was quite sure it would come on.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* observed, in answer, that it was certainly his wish to have the proposition discussed as early as possible, but as it was evident that the debate on the remaining estimates would be protracted to a considerable length, he thought it would be better, in order to avoid disappointment, to name Monday next at once.—That day was accordingly fixed for bringing forward the question.

Mr. *Brougham* moved that the Paper No. 9, of those which had that day been presented to the House by Mr. Lushington, should be printed.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* suggested whether it would not be much better that all of them should be printed.

Mr. *Brougham* said, he could have no other objection to printing that voluminous mass of papers, except the expense which it would incur. With respect to the particular paper in question, he considered it to contain matter which rendered it desirable that no delay should take place in the printing of it, in order that the subject to which it referred might be brought under the consideration of the House.

Mr. *Fremantle* urged the propriety of not printing the whole of the papers upon the principle of economy.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he was glad to find the hon. gentlemen opposite at last disposed to some degree of economy in the article of printing papers which were presented to that House. He certainly did not wish to add to that expense, but as he had not looked over the papers in question, he could not say how far it might be necessary to have the others printed, either wholly or in part.

The motion was agreed to.

Sir Thomas Thompson's Appointment.] Mr. *Wynn* rose to submit a motion to the House. He said, that having noticed the attendance of a gallant officer in that House on a former evening, who had accepted a place without vacating his seat, which he did not conceive came within the meaning of the statute of queen Anne, it not being a commission either in the army or navy, he wished to bring the question distinctly under the notice of parliament. He should abstain from all observations at present, and merely move as a ground for a future measure. "That there be laid before the House a copy of the Appointment of Sir Thomas Boulden Thompson to be treasurer of Greenwich-hospital." Ordered.

Army Estimates.] On the order of the day being read, for going into a committee of supply,

Mr. *Wynn* rose, pursuant to notice, to submit a motion for dividing the general vote proposed on the estimates for the service of the army into separate questions, according to the different services to which the gross amount of force was to be applied. This proposition was founded on the ancient practice of the House, as it was observed down to so late a period as the peace in 1802. It was unquestionable, that the course of proceeding he now recommended might produce inconvenience in time of war, by causing a disclosure of the destination intended for a particular branch of military force. In peace, however, nothing of this kind could be apprehended, and the great utility of thus dividing the consideration must, he thought, be very evident. They had been obliged at once to debate the whole amount of force to be kept up in Great Britain, Ireland, and the colonies, and the probability was, that one vote would be proposed for all the items included under No. 1 of the estimates. The House, however, ought to look at them separately. The whole charge of the household troops in 1808 was only 332,248*l.* In 1809 it was nearly the same; and it was impossible that this calculation could be advantageously taken with that of the forces serving in the colonies. He was desirous of bringing this matter forward, not with a view of creating prejudice on any one question, but for the sake of mutual convenience. He should therefore move, "That it be an instruction to the committee, that they do make separate provision to defray the charge of his majesty's forces serving abroad and at home under the heads of 1. Household troops. 2. Cavalry serving in Great Britain, Guernsey, and Jersey. 3. Infantry, ditto. 4. Cavalry serving in Ireland. 5. Infantry, ditto. 6. Troops serving in the colonies and plantations. 7. Recruiting service. 8. Contingencies in Great Britain. 9. Contingencies in Ireland."

Lord *Palmerston* was extremely willing to give every information he possibly could to the members of the House. Without following the minute classification of the hon. gentleman, of which he saw no utility, he considered the object he had proposed might be better attained by the following arrangement: 1. A general estimate of the forces employed in Britain and Ireland, which necessarily included the household troops, cavalry, infantry, waggon train and contingencies: 2. A general estimate of the troops on foreign service, excepting those in France and India: and 3. A general estimate of the corps to be reduced, which obviously were included under the head of contingencies. He was of opinion this would ultimately be found the better mode of proceeding, as it brought the whole subject at one view under the notice of the House without dividing their attention to every *minutia*, which was in fact a mere prolongation of debate without any good to the public.

Mr. *Wynn* was far from wishing to tie up the hands of his majesty's government, but he thought it better for the public service, that each sum should be voted separately, as gentlemen might naturally be supposed to have different opinions respecting the particular bodies of troops to be discharged. He was extremely anxious that the House should discuss each particular sum by itself, without blending it with others, because then it might more easily be ascertained what particular number of troops in each description were to be kept up.

Lord *Castlereagh* thought the principle laid down by his noble friend would answer the object which the last speaker wished to attain. But he could not consent to the question being taken up separately, as the hon. gentleman had suggested, because this would evidently break down the votes of the House of Commons, and confine their attention to local inquiries, instead of objects of more importance. He thought the more generally the vote was proposed, the better it would evidently be for both parties.

Mr. *Calcraft* said, that his hon. friend's meaning was, that he wished to move a reduction of the household troops; whereas at present all the troops were voted in a mass. If, however, he wished to reduce the cavalry one half, it was only deducting that sum from the whole amount. The same course might be adopted with respect to the regiments of the line; but if he proposed to take every charge separately, the estimates must be entirely new modelled, for which there appeared no necessity.

Mr. *Tierney* observed, that the object of his hon. friend was, to propose a reduction of money; and if he took any particular sum, for instance 100,000*l.* from the gross amount, it would not appear for what purpose it had been deducted. That was the material point which they had in view.

Lord *Palmerston* said, that if the hon. gentleman would withdraw his motion, he would present his estimate, and then move that it should be referred to the committee of supply.

Mr. *Wynn* wished to move a reduction of the charge for the household troops. The only way in which he could then do it was, by proposing that a sum less by 100,000*l.* should be taken from the whole amount. He did not understand, however, how they could make separate deductions, without having separate votes.

Lord *Palmerston* said, that if the hon. gentleman thought the charge for the household troops too large, he could move a smaller sum. The question would then be put for that sum.

Mr. *Ponsonby* was not sure that he understood the noble lord. Did he propose one vote for Great Britain, Ireland, and the colonies; or did he mean to propose separate votes?

Lord *Palmerston* replied, that he intended a separate vote for Great Britain and Ireland.

Mr. *Ponsonby* said, that if there were no objection, he would prefer taking the vote for England distinct from that of Ireland, not because he objected to the amount of the grant for the establishment in the latter country, but to its duration. Instead of its being for twelve months he would prefer it at six months, in order that the House should, before its adjournment, examine into the state of Ireland—which state no man who heard the statement of the right hon. secretary for Ireland a few nights ago, could contemplate without feeling it his duty to the House and the country, to call for a speedy inquiry into so paramount a subject. This investigation was on all sides called for, and the only way to ensure it was, to bring the duration of the proposed Irish establishment within six months.

Mr. *Peel* said, that a right hon. baronet had given notice of a motion for the 28th instant which would involve much of the consideration which the right hon. gentleman was anxious to have introduced. The House was at liberty to inquire into, or negative such a proposition, whether the 25,000 men were, or were not voted for

Ireland. The subjects were, in his opinion, distinct.

Mr. *Ponsonby* said, that he rarely observed a motion effective which originated on his side of the House. Now, on the state of Ireland, both sides concurred in the necessity of inquiry. The motion of his right hon. friend might do something, perhaps; but he would rather prefer the present vote to be limited to six months. If that were granted, an inquiry might arise; if not, he feared it was hopeless.

Mr. *Abercrombie* said, that nothing connected with the consideration of the estimates, important as it was, was half so interesting as the recent statement of the right hon. secretary relative to Ireland—a statement believed by many to be an exaggerated one—he alluded to the unfortunate avowal, from authority, that a force of 25,000 men was necessary in Ireland. He should very much wish this part of the estimates to be kept distinct, because gentlemen could then precisely understand upon what principles they gave their votes. It was rather hard to assume, that Ireland required such a force for the maintenance of her tranquillity, and equally unwise to postpone the discussion upon the merits of this subject. From the feeling of both sides of the House, there was at present every appearance of a concurrence in the motion for this inquiry, and they had better take advantage of the moment when they were likely to agree, than defer the consideration until they might probably differ.

Lord *Milton* asked, whether the noble lord intended to move a particular sum for the household troops, or to include them in the whole amount?

Lord *Palmerston* said, he meant to vote the whole at once; it would be competent for members to move any deduction.

Lord *Castlereagh* said, that when any gentleman wished to move an amendment, it would be done practically by naming that the deduction was for such a particular species of force. It might be right to return to the usual manner of voting, but in this instance it would lead too much into detail; for it would be necessary, after stating each particular branch of service, to have a sub-division of almost every description of troops.

Mr. *Tierney* asked, if he were to propose that a sum of money should be deducted from the charge for the household troops, and then another sum for dragoons, in what way would those deductions be made distinctly to appear?

Lord *Castlereagh* said, his conception was, that the grant would then be reduced to that sum.

Mr. *Wynn* said, that was his idea; but this did not answer the object which he had in view.

The motion was then read again from the chair, and strangers were ordered to withdraw. No division however took place, Mr. Wynn's motion being agreed to. The House then resolved itself into the committee. On the first resolution, that a sum not exceeding 385,279*l.* 9*s.* 6*d.* be voted for the household troops for 366 days, being moved,

Mr. *Calcraft* said, that having heard no satisfactory reason for the great amount of the household troops, he thought it not an unreasonable proposition that they should be reduced to the establishment of 1791. These were merely parade troops, and the number then retained was quite sufficient for such a purpose. It had been urged, that the household troops were a valuable and experienced corps: but that was no reason for their increase, it not being particularly necessary to employ experienced troops in the mere duty of the metropolis. He should, therefore, propose to reduce the household cavalry from 1744 to one-half of that number, and they would then be 100 more in number than they were in 1791. As to the foot-guards, their duty also was merely parade duty. We sent them to Chatham because they had no employment in London; and when they came to Chatham they had as little to do there; in time of peace they took no colony duty. In 1791 they were considered strong enough at 3,765; they were now 8,100 in number; he should, therefore, propose 4,050, which would leave them somewhat stronger than they were in 1791. At present one regiment was almost as strong as three then. He would not trouble the House by enforcing his proposition, but would contend, that no adequate ground could be stated for this very large increase. He would therefore propose, as an amendment, that instead of the sum 385,276*l.* 9*s.* 6*d.* there be substituted that of 192,638*l.* 4*s.* 9*d.* for the purposes in question.

Lord *Castlereagh* apprehended that the hon. gentleman had not stated the question rightly, or consistent with the opinion entertained by the House; for he had attempted to do two things at once. The House had already come to a vote for a certain amount of force to be kept up. It was the wish of the House to keep up this number; but the hon. member now attempted to counteract the vote of the other night, by withdrawing 5,000 men. If he were disposed to take the sense of the House upon his amendment, he ought to move the difference between the number and the amount of charge, and it would be competent to any member to refuse to vote the sum required; but it was inconsistent to vote for the reduction of household troops and the guards, when the vote as to number having passed the House, that number must be made up by raising new ordinary troops of the line. He wished to submit to the House the merits of the case. It had not been usual to denominate the guards household troops—they were composed only of the heavy cavalry, and not of the guards. He denied that they were kept for the purposes of parade; for a great portion of the guards were certainly kept at present in France, performing the ordinary duties, conformably to the arrangements in that country. It was fully explained, the other night, that the guards were not meant to be brought home. The hon. member was therefore perfectly wrong in his notion that they were to be brought home for the purposes of parade. He would say, that the household troops proved themselves the most useful cavalry in the service, and it would be of the greatest advantage, instead of disbanding any part of them, to have always the power of sending, in case of any new war, six or eight squadrons of them abroad. The hon. member had fallen into an extraordinary error to suppose that the household troops were kept only for the purpose of parade and attending on the royal family. As to his proposition for reducing them, he apprehended the experiment would produce the very reverse of economy, and he would tell him why. There was not a single objection that could be made in the House to those troops. If the hon. gentleman's object was to put down that description of force, in order to substitute regiments of the line, the House would have to consider what direct military loss would be sustained by so doing. When there were deducted from the army all the men whose time of service was about to expire, and those who were obliged to retire from infirmities, it would be seen that, in point of fact, the army would be far from complete; nor was it so at the present moment to the amount required. If gentlemen were to think what expense would be caused by sending adrift four or five thousand men, each of whom had probably cost the country about 100*l.*, they would see that the result would be very different from economy. But what also would be the effect of turning away men who had so admirably fought our battles? Where should we find their equals? We must go again into the market to look for as many peasants to supply their place, only for the purpose of saving an assumed difference between the expense of the guards and as many men of the line. The guards were as fine men as any in the world. To disband any of them would only entail an additional expense on the country, for the pensions of such as were entitled to them, and the expenses of recruiting, and we should break down the best props in the service, and have to replace them with green soldiers, and new troops of the line. To say that the home service required no more duty than was necessary in 1791, was an assumption without proof, and such as no man could maintain who looked at the different situation in which the country now stood. The hon. gentleman had said, that the guards were sent to Chatham to do nothing. So far from this being the case, the duty of the fortifications and dockyard of Chatham always required 1000 men. All the saving that would take place by the reduction proposed in the household cavalry, would be the trifling sum of 13,000*l.*; and besides giving pensions to the men, we should be obliged to sell half the fine horses of the establishment at a vast loss, while we should be obliged to raise cavalry of a different description, to make up the number, under every disadvantage of expense, and inexperience in the men.

Mr. *Calcraft* said, he must confess, that of all the speeches he had heard from the noble lord, he had never listened to one in which he was so completely driven out of the field of argument. He seemed to have forgotten on what point the sense of the House had already been taken; it was only as to the reduction of ten thousand men. But the noble lord's speech would go against all reduction whatever. "What," said the noble lord, "will you part with those brave troops, after they have so gallantly distinguished themselves in action?" To be sure we would. This was the natural consequence of their bravery, and the reason why we should part with them. Those actions had led to peace, and peace required that we should reduce our establishment and expenses. Why ought we to have more guards now than in 1791? The noble lord had only said that we ought, but had given no reason for it. The statement respecting the number of guards that were to remain in France had been corrected since the debates on the estimates had begun. This was the scrape into which ministers had got, by first asserting that those 2000 troops were coming home; and it was also known from other authority, that these troops actually were at first coming home; the fact was assuredly so understood on this side of the water. Now, if they had been brought home, it was clear that we should have had 2000 more than we wanted, and consequently they would have had nothing to do. He must be an idiot who would require what was impracticable; but what the gentlemen on his side wished to do, was, to endeavour to obtain something for the people, in the way of reduction of expense. He must repeat, that the noble lord's argument went against all reduction whatever. If we were to set up the fineness of the men and the beauty of the horses as the plea for keeping up the establishment, no reduction would ever be attended to.

Lord *Palmerston* thought it was a misrepresentation to say, that the noble lord was against all reduction; the House had decided what number of men should be employed, and if the House remained in that opinion, and was not disposed to diminish the total amount, then the question would be as to the difference of the expense between household troops and troops of the line. The saving, then, gained by reducing half the amount of the household cavalry, and converting them into heavy dragoons, would be 13,000*l.*; but even this saving would be counterbalanced by the expenses of bounty and the purchase of horses. And what, then would be this economy for which we parted with the best force we had? The same argument applied to the exchanging foot-guards for troops of the line. As to the alteration in the destination of the 2000 guards, stated to be coming home, the error was entirely his own, arising from the hurry of business. He had misunderstood the arrangements, in the first instance, but he could assure the House that no alteration had been made in them, and that it was never intended that they should be brought home. The foot guards were available for service to all parts of the empire. Already they had been to Ireland, and it was intended to hold them ready for any service of a similar description. They were the finest body of men we had; and the House could not desire to exchange experienced, disciplined troops for raw levies, paying for the change, and receiving a useless instead of a perfect force. He had heard an anecdote, that when the guards marched out in the rebellion of 1745, they were met by parties of citizens, who exlaimed, "There go our brave guards! There go the pillars of the state!" Aye, replied one of them, but when we have licked the enemy, the cry will be, "there go the caterpillars of the state!" He must finally observe, that by the reduction proposed, we should lose more than we could possibly gain.

Mr. *Methuen* thought the arguments of the noble lords opposite indicated that the expense ought not to be saved, because it was trivial. He thought the noble lord (Castlereagh) in proving too much, had proved nothing. He wished to know in what country the noble lord thought the danger likely to arise, which would require the eight squadrons to be sent abroad? When he saw the monstrous establishment that it was determined to keep at home, in a time of profound peace, he had no hesitation in delivering it as his opinion that it was unnecessary.

Mr. *Wynn* said, the two noble lords had made the most extraordinary mistake he had ever heard in that House, except that of the chancellor of the exchequer, when he made a mistake of a million and a half. When the noble lord said, that the whole saving would be 13,000*l.* he should have said 35,000*l.* He would refer to the two last charges of dragoon regiments, those of general Tarleton and George Anson, the first of 1,151 men, the other 712, total 1,863—total charge 77,618*l.*: total charge of the household troops, containing 1744 men, being 150 less than the former, 113,554*l.* The dragoons were 150 more in number, and 35,000*l.* less in expense; and this miscalculation had been repeated with the utmost confidence.

Lord *Castlereagh* explained the manner in which he had made his calculation, and said that the inaccuracy was but in the difference between 27,000*l.* and 37,000*l.*

Mr. *Fremantle* thought he could point

out another inaccuracy of the noble lord. In arguing on the amount of the guards, he stated that 1000 guards on the lines of Chatham would not cost more than 1000 other men. He would point out to the committee the difference of expense between the guards and other regiments. Of the guards it would be seen that 2251 men cost 75,863*l.*, while the two regiments, under the command of the duke of Kent, consisting of 2033 men, cost only 59,496*l.*, making an excess of 16,367*l.* This was the difference between one corps and another. He would not enter upon the argument which the noble lord had taken. His object was only to see how, by a reduction of men, we could diminish the general expense of the estimates.

Lord *Castlereagh* said, he never had assumed that 1000 of the guards were nearly equal in point of expense to as many troops of the line. He had assumed that the guards were more expensive than those of the line, in the proportion of a fourth. But he had contended, that by dispersing the guards, and raising troops of the line in their stead, the country would lose in one way more than they gained in the other.

Mr. *Brougham* said, that though he had on a former occasion stated his opinion upon the estimates generally, yet he was then anxious to give it on them in detail, as a defiance had been thrown out to gentlemen on his side to go into such examination. He accepted the gauntlet which had been thrown down, and he believed that the more minutely the House examined the several items, the more objectionable they would find them. He objected, in the first instance, to the great number of guards, which were intended to be kept up, and even to the new-fangled French name of household troops, which had been given them. Had the noble lord made out a case to the House, to prove the necessity of raising the number of those guards to more than double what it was in 1791? If such a case had been proved to the House, he should not have opposed the motion. But the fact was, that with all the anxiety evinced by the noble lord (Castlereagh) and his friends to go into the examination of the estimates, item by item, they had failed in producing any one proof of the necessity of the increase which had been made. The House had advanced to the present stage of the debate, and no one allegation had been made to show this necessity. It had indeed been said, that 2400 of them were to be kept up in France, but allowing this, there were still 7600 to be accounted for. What proof had the noble lord given that the increase of even 3600 men in the establishment since Mr. Pitt's time was necessary? He wished to be informed, what had happened since that period to render the number of guards nearly double what it was then? England was at present more peaceable than in 1792. At the latter period, though the people were not in rebellion, yet the country was every day assailed with reports of plots and dangerous associations. Addresses and votes of the House agreed in stating, that some public danger did exist, and yet with all these threatening appearances, Mr. Pitt did not think it necessary to propose a greater force in the guards than 4000 men. What he would ask, did the noble lord see in the state of the metropolis at the present day, to make a force nearly double that number necessary? The people of London were never at any former period more obedient to the laws or more peaceable than they were at the present moment. His hon. and learned friend, the attorney-general, whom he then saw in his place, could attest this, for he believed that his hon. and learned friend had not, for the last two years, resorted to an *ex-officio* information. There was now no jacobinism, even the very word had scarcely been mentioned in the House for the last five or six years. Whence then, was this danger to come from, which could render the proposed force necessary? But he much feared that it was not merely to keep the peace of the metropolis, that this force of guards was kept up. There was more of empty show and parade in it than real necessity. It was a mockery to talk of internal danger in the present state of the country. The noble lord driven out of the argument of necessity, had had recourse to another, and said that those troops had distinguished themselves in the late campaigns. He would ask, which of our troops had not done so? The same argument might, if it were of any force, be urged against the disbanding of a single soldier; for they had all distinguished themselves most gloriously; and though some of them had not the same opportunities of making themselves conspicuous as others, who from their situations in particular actions had borne the great pressure of the enemy, yet it did not follow that they were less brave, or had less claim to be kept up. It would be unjust and dangerous to say to any of those troops "You must be disbanded, because you have not distinguished yourself as much as others." Such language he held to be dangerous and unconstitutional. It would, in the mind of the soldier, associate the idea of his being disbanded with that of his being disgraced. He could never assent to such doctrine as that which the arguments of the noble lord seemed to imply. He could not consent to keep any number of troops on foot, for no other reason than that they had distinguished themselves when their services were necessary. He could not agree with the noble lord in letting it be thought for an instant, that soldiers disgraced themselves by becoming citizens. He would speak the language of the constitution, and would say to the soldier, "You have faithfully performed that duty for which you were called forth; return now, and be again a citizen" [Hear!]. This was the language of the constitution, and if the time was passed when such language would be held in that House, he still hoped that out of it, no one would dare to say that a soldier was degraded by becoming a citizen [Hear, hear!]. It had been said by some gentlemen on the other side—"Is this a fair return for the services of those troops, that when you no longer want their exertions, you shall turn them adrift, and suffer them to become scavengers?" He wished no such thing. He did not wish to see them unrewarded for their services, but he could not for a moment think that they would be degraded by returning to that state of society from which they should not have been called in the first instance, but by necessity. The hon. and learned gentleman then contended, that, in an economical point of view, troops of the line should be substituted for a great portion of those guards; for that comparing the expense of 2000 guards with that of 2000 of the line, the balance would be upwards of 10,000*l.* against the former, and though the saving would be but small, yet in the present state of the country, no possible reduction of expense should be thought too small to be attended to. He also contended, that the committee had a right to correct the vote of a former evening, if they conceived they had then voted too much; and though they could not do so directly by reducing the number of men then agreed to, they might do it by not voting a sum sufficient for their support. The committee were no more precluded from a correction of their former vote in such a way than the House would be from rejecting a bill in its third reading, all the particulars of which they had sanctioned in its preceding stages. The hon. and learned gentleman concluded, amidst loud cries of hear, by repeating his former argument, that there existed at present no greater necessity for the proposed number of guards than there did in 1792, and that the only end which their existence to so large an amount could answer, was the gratification of a childish and contemptible passion for military parade—childish it might be called, though not altogether contemptible, when its dangerous tendency was considered.

Mr. *Wellesley Pole* said, he hardly thought it necessary to rise for the purpose of defending the estimates, as he trusted what had been said by his noble friend on the subject had already satisfied the House of their propriety. The hon. and learned gentleman, instead of confining himself to the question immediately before the committee, had gone generally into the estimates, in order to repeat the statements which he had thought it his duty to make on the first night. He had accordingly again told them, that these estimates were such that they went against the best principles of the constitution, which they would be likely to destroy, if those who produced them should succeed in gaining for them the sanction of that House, and he had again said in substance, though he (Mr. W. Pole) did not know that he had in words that night, that it was the intention of ministers to establish a military government. Much notice had been taken of what had been formerly said with respect to the course the gentlemen opposite seemed disposed to pursue while considering this question. He remembered it had been remarked, that it was not extraordinary they should feel inclined to indulge in general declamatory statements without going into particulars. This he still thought was naturally enough the line of conduct which they would prefer on this occasion, as in looking into the items of these estimates, it was impossible to find any thing there by which these general statements could be borne out: it was impossible to find any thing that went against the principles of the British constitution, or that tended to show that it was in the comtemplation of ministers to establish a military government. He congratulated the committee on the manner in which the debate had been conducted, and on the result which it had already produced. It was his opinion, that a great deal had been gained by the mode in which these estimates had been discussed. In the first place, the principle of the arrangements suggested by ministers had been adopted by that House. The question had been decided in a very full committee, where it had been carried by a large majority. It had thus been declared, that the full amount of the force proposed to be maintained by ministers was necessary, and as small as with prudence it could possibly be made. The House had agreed to the resolution, and the patient and liberal investigation which the subject had received afforded him the highest satisfaction. The hon. and learned gentleman opposite and his friends had not received that support from hon. members that they had been led to expect. After the hon. and learned gentleman himself had made his broad statements against the government, his opinions had remained unsupported in the committee. Gentlemen as fond of the constitution as he could be, had not seen the danger which he thought he had discovered; and it was satisfactory to him to know, that those gentlemen on whose support the hon. and learned member might have calculated, had not imputed to ministers a design to infringe upon the constitution, or to govern by military force. Though they differed from government as to the amount of the establishments, it was gratifying to him to find that none of them had supposed that it was the intention of ministers to do other than that which they had conceived to be necessary for the safety and prosperity of the united empire. The question to which they were now come, was only a question of degree; the principle for which ministers had contended having been generally admitted. It was remarkable that gentlemen on different sides of the House, not professing to agree exactly with the views of himself and his colleagues, when they came to go into the details, had never been able to agree exactly with each other. They had concurred in acquitting ministers of any design upon the constitution; had believed the system recommended by them to be that which they thought best for the country; and some hon. members had admitted, that on further information, they might be brought to think it that, which, in the present circumstances of the country, might be acted upon better than any other. This liberality and confidence on their part, made it more than ever the duty of the government to look narrowly at the expenditure of the country, and from that time forward to labour unceasingly to make every possible reduction consistent with the public service. He believed he might assume that ministers had successfully proved the present establishment was not the permanent peace establishment; and that parts of the present plan had nothing to do with any peace establishment at all. In another year it would be for the government to ascertain what would be the amount of expenditure to which our peace establishment might be limitted. It would then be for them to endeavour to lower the estimates as far as they should be practicable, without hazarding the public security. This they would particularly owe to those hon. gentlemen who had treated them with such liberality on the present occasion. He had proved that with the exception of the hon. member who had so boldly ventured on his charges in the first instance, none, from what appeared on these estimates, were disposed to impute to them a wish to overturn the constitution. This was one subject of gratification, and another was the manner in which this question had been brought before the House, and had gone forth to the country. From these circumstances the people had been enabled to appreciate the value of the pacification which had been effected. They saw in the peace concluded, how much the true interests of England had been consulted. Nothing but this debate could so well have proved to them that their interests had been properly taken care of. It was now understood that stations of importance to England had been secured in almost every part of the habitable globe—that there was scarcely a point that the soldier or the merchant could desire, that was not in the possession of Great Britain. They saw that if the new colonies caused some expense by the demand for an additional force which they created, that these acquisitions were such as to give the country benefits in various parts of the world (as his noble friend had said), which former statesmen wished Great Britain to possess, though they dared not hope to see such projects realised. This debate had done good, as it had led the public calmly to consider whether the force which it was proposed to keep up for the security of the mother country, and the defence of the colonies, was or was not too large. They had also had time well to consider, whether, what had been proposed was at variance with the true principles of the constitution, and whether it at all portended the establishment of a military government. Before the people were led to believe this, he trusted they would look to the experience of the past, and compare it with their knowledge of the present, and to the character of those who had formed the estimates, and to that of those who opposed them. Doing this, they would be enabled to judge who would be most likely to compromise the interests and violate the constitution of the country. They would, perhaps, recollect that those who now opposed the plans of ministers, were those who formerly declared while we were engaged in the Peninsular war, that there was no hope for Spain;—that they had even designated the day by which all the British would be driven from that part of the continent, or become the prisoners of France; they would recollect that these were the persons who had incessantly called upon us to make peace with Buonaparté, while he was in the zenith of his power; that even when that tyrant returned from Elba to France, in the last year, this advice was still reiterated. They had wished us then to submit to a pacification with him, rather, than standing on the energy and valour of the country, and those of its allies, to make head once more against his aggressions. Above all it would be remembered, that when, on the occasion to which he had last referred, ministers, grateful for the liberal supplies confided to their care, had expressed a hope that these would suffice to bring the war to a successful termination; these persons had not failed to assert that the country ought not to be satisfied with such a statement, and had endeavoured to damp their spirits by declaring that it was likely similar sacrifices would be called for, year after year, and that it was possible the new war would last as long as the former had done. He trusted these prognostications would be borne in mind—that these forebodings would be remembered, and that the country at large would do justice between those with whom they had originated and the present ministers.

Mr. *Wynn* conceived that nothing could be more foreign to the question of a peace establishment than any reference to such topics as those to which the right hon. gentleman had adverted. It was a certain proof of a weak cause, and that he had no better ground to stand upon. The hon. member then entered into some statements to show the additional expense that would attend the increase of the guards. He maintained, that even the small saving which might now be made was an object, and that if they could not effect more, they were bound in duty to their constituents to accomplish this at least.

General *Loftus* complained, that the hon. and learned gentleman opposite, did not sufficiently acknowledge the services of the guards. He did not recollect their services in America in 1776, in Egypt, and on the continent. It appeared to him, that the hon. and learned gentleman entertained the idea of the guards serving only as a parade or show in the metropolis. He would ask any reasonable man, was it fair dealing with those men, who had been so honourably serving their country, as soon as they had done fighting, to turn them adrift upon the world without any support? Even on the home duty at this moment, the men were in bed but one night out of three. It was one of the most efficient and gallant corps in the service, and had been sent every where that active service was to be performed.

Mr. *Brougham* explained that he never undervalued the services of these troops, but had always spoken in the highest terms of those services: what he maintained was, that they were now useless, and ought to return to their old employments. The navy had been paid off; and why should not the army be put into the same condition? He would remind the hon. general of a fact. Lord Nelson's ship, the Victory, in which that great commander had fought some of his most distinguished battles, and in which he had fallen, was now laid up in ordinary, and the crew turned adrift.

Lord *Castlereagh* also wished to explain a misconception which had arisen as to the name given to the guards. An exception had been made to the term of household troops; they had certainly been so termed in Mr. Burke's bill, but they had since that period materially changed in their character, and had been brought more into the field of war. The hon. and learned gentleman had endeavoured to impress upon the House, with the utmost of his ingenuity, that the government had some motive of patronage in bringing forward the guards. Now he would state to the House the increase of the numbers since the year 1792. The number of battalions of guards remained precisely as they were in 1792. The increase of the companies was not much in favour of the hon. and learned gentleman's argument. In 1792 there were 64 companies, and now there were 72 companies, making an increase of eight companies. This was the mode in which the debate was to be discussed: it was assumed that patronage was the sole view of government, when, in fact, only the good of the country was at heart.

Mr. *Tierney* said, that the House had now gone through seven nights debate on these estimates, and could judge how much ministers were to be relied upon, and what was the true meaning of all their flaming professions. There might be those who believed the statement of government as to the quantity of force necessary for our foreign possessions. He confessed that he had not been convinced in the smallest degree; but 25,000 men had been voted for England, which were said to be 8,000 more than were kept up in 1792, and the noble lord had asserted, that 8,000 men were no more than the exigencies of the country required; but he begged the House would bear in mind, that in the present discussion we had nothing to do with the reliefs, a point which had been so strongly urged, but merely to consider the amount of the household troops to be kept up for the purpose of the splendour of the court, and the duty in the metropolis. Did any one pretend to say that that duty had increased since 1792? At any rate it could not be said that the people were now more disposed to riot or rebellion than at that period. He really believed that if double the number could be made to go down the throats of the public, plenty of employment would be found for them, for nothing more was requisite than to double the force usually placed at the Opera-house, the Theatres, or at the routs. But at this crisis it was ridiculous to think of such schemes; the day of retrenchment was come, and he defied any man to lay his hand upon his heart, and say that any alteration had taken place in the habits of the people which could render the reign of the Prince Regent different from that of George 3rd [Hear, hear!]. London, in a military point of view, was no greater now than it was in 1792; for the Tower had had the good fortune to escape all the operations of the ordnance, and was not militarily greater than in 1792. He hoped gentlemen would feel this as they should feel it. Let them bear in mind that what they were voting was intelligible to every man in England. The noble lord had attempted something like argument on the present occasion, and the amount of this argument was the services of the guards. Why, no man ever doubted their services. From the first hour of their constitution down to the present day, they had been the wonder of Europe; nor had they ever been employed where they did not distinguish themselves. But from what number did these guards spring? From 3,000 only. They might be reduced again to that number, and, if it should afterwards be found necessary, they might be increased with the same elasticity. The horse guards had also distinguished themselves on all occasions. The noble lord had said, Will you turn all these men adrift?—"I cannot, said Mr. Tierney," turn them adrift, because they would be retiring on pensions; but this is what I cannot comprehend—the noble lord tells me they are cheaper serving than retiring." The noble lord had drawn another argument from the beauty of the horses: he dared to say they were fine horses—very fine horses. But very fine horses generally fetched a very fine price in the market. The noble lord, however, did not know what they could do with so many horses in the market at once; the market would be glutted by them. But if this sort of argument were to be allowed to prevail, he did not see where it could stop. Supposing it for instance applied to another part of the army which had united the acclamations of all parties, he meant the Scotch regiments. The noble lord would say to them, what would then become of the philibegs and bagpipes? The market would be quite overstocked with them—there would be no purchasers—there would not be a sufficient number of admirers of these commodities to take off the whole stock [a laugh]. While all this jealousy was entertained at the smallest reduction of any part of the army, not one single voice had been raised in defence of the navy. But when they touched the foot guards, all was alarm. If they once touched any part of the favourite horse guards, which lined both sides of the streets through which the Prince Regent had to pass, the whole country was exposed to destruction—all would be swallowed up by France. In 1792 there was much greater cause for alarm than at the present moment. He would only state to the House, that if in this vote he should be defeated he despaired of doing any good in the way of economy. The noble lord seemed to have a curious notion of numbers: he called 150,000 men a small army, and he called 68 a great majority. Now, he thought this, on the other hand, a very small majority; and above all, they ought to take into account that it was a decreasing majority at every step. This was rather a poor compliment to the eloquence of the noble lord. On the first division the majority was 120—by one speech alone of the noble lord, he lost 20 votes; and altogether the noble lord had been going on losing votes, at the rate of eight and a fractional part for every hour spoken by him [a laugh]. If he were disappointed in this, he had but little hopes of good from any opposition, however successful, to the property tax. He could not but wonder to see gentlemen, who had made most flaming speeches in the city against the property tax, now voting with ministers for the establishments. He owned he attached ten times more importance to the present question than to the property tax. The one was a question of mere money; but this was a question of vital importance to the country—whether it was to change its whole form and constitutional system. When he said this, he did not mean to impute to ministers a deliberate system of overturning the constitution—he acquitted them of entertaining a deliberate system on any subject. But though they might not deliberately plan the overthrow of the constitution, he would say that the measures they were pursuing put the constitution in great danger. A right hon. gentleman (Mr. C. Grant, jun.), on a former evening, had enlarged on the quality possessed by our constitution of making an adequate resistance in every great pressure. He should doubt, however, whether the London part of the constitution was fit of itself to bear the pressure of 9 or 10,000 troops. But, at all events, he saw no reason for making the trial. If they were to have a peace without any of the blessings of peace—if they were to be cursed with a large standing army—if this was the result of all the sacrifices which we had made, he would defy any man to show whence we were to draw our resources for war. The mere saving of the 5,000 men which, in the first instance would be effected, was not all; they would find other savings to depend on it—they would not need, for instance, the same number of officers on the staff. He laughed at all the estimates of the men absolutely necessary for this or that duty, because he knew the quarter from which they came, the head staff at the horse guards. He had the highest respect for the duke of York, but no man would convince him that at the meetings at the horse guards any great zeal would be manifested for a reduction in the number of our troops. If there were no enemy to be apprehended, why keep up 111,000 men for the defence of the British empire? They might say, that such and such a number were necessary to defend this or that place in case of attack; but when we had no enemy to apprehend, why were we to presume an attack on every one of our possessions? The House, however, ought to bear always in mind, that the men now proposed to be reduced, had nothing to do with the force necessary for our foreign possessions—their service did not extend beyond a limited circle round London. When he first heard of the necessity for such a number of men to be stationed along the coast of Devon, he had asked a military man if it was requisite to have all these men to keep the French from landing at Dover?—No, he answered, it was not; but if the French should come somewhere else, such a force would prevent them from getting back again that way. He repeated, there was no occasion for one man more now than we had in 1792. Again and again he wished them to bear in mind the effect which would be produced out of doors—that every man understood the question—that it required no military skill—that these troops were merely so many assistants to the police, and, what was more, to give a new degree of splendour. It was a question between the country and the court, and nothing else. Let gentlemen support the court if they would, but let him tell them they were supporting the court. If they would not practise economy here, he wished to ask when they intended to practise it? If they would not now reduce the establishments, when and where would they reduce them?

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* would not trouble the House with any new argument or statement, but would only reply to some of the remarks that had the estimates now on their table, and see whether it might not be possible to reduce them—whether it would not be highly beneficial to reduce them. That it would beneficial for the country to be relieved from that pressure which so large a military establishment must occasion, if that were possible, there could be no doubt; and certainly it would be still more constitutionally important to reduce that establishment than it would be beneficial in other respects. That it was possible to reduce the military establishment considerably, he thought would appear evident to any one who looked at the present state of Europe. If, however, that state was not such as to enable this country, without danger, to bring its military establishment to a scale far below that which was now in contemplation, ministers had very ill done their duty, and ought to be called to a severe account. After the exertions which the country had made, and after the opportunity which those exertions had afforded them, and the means which they had at their disposal, if they had not procured for the country such a peace as would render it not only safe, but beneficial, to reduce the military expenditure much more than appeared to be now intended by them, however well they might have used the means put in their hands for the prosecution of the last war, they had most unwisely used them with reference to the peace. An eminent French writer had observed, that in the reign of Louis 14th, the love of a great military establishment operated like a disease both on the sovereign and on the people. The same disease seized the French under the dominion of Buonaparté, and with such force as to threaten, and almost actually to overturn, the liberties and indepence of Europe. In former times this disease had not reached this country. Why, then, should it now be brought upon us? Was there any thing in the circumstances of these times to afford any colour of excuse for it? Why should it now at last reach us, to crush the nation with the perpetual burthens of long and expensive war, and to prey upon the vitals of the constitution? Why should we now adopt the policy of the great continental powers, and endeavour to imitate them in keeping up a vast military force? The force for Great Britain alone, their lordships would observe, was 25,000 men, besides that large and disciplined army of 30,000 men maintained in the French territory, which might be very soon brought to act even here upon any serious emergency. This, too, was exclusive of the militia, which, if there should be occasion, might be almost immediately called into action. He would ask, whether so great a force could be necessary for Great Britain alone under these circumstances?—whether so great a force could be necessary for the colonies as was now proposed?—whether so large a garrison was now necessary for Gibraltar, when we had so great an establishment at Malta, ready for all the purposes for which they could be required in the Mediterranean? It had been said that our conquests had been so extensive as to demand a much larger military establishment than at any former period. But it might very well be doubted whether those acquisitions could be considered as of any value, if such were to be the consequences. Then their lordships would observe, that there were 25,000 men for Ireland. He had always been of opinion that Ireland was treated too much like a conquered country, and that there had been too great a tendency to keep down that valuable part of the empire by force of arms, rather than to endeavour to secure the attachment of the people by conciliation. This had unfortunately been a strong feature in the policy of this country with respect to Ireland, and had, no doubt, contributed to bring it into its present unhappy state. But it was their lordships' duty to consider, whether some other remedy than such a large military force might not be found for an evil of such magnitude; and this was an additional reason for their going into a committee to consider the state of the nation. He had hoped that something would have been said in the speech from the throne with respect to the state of Ireland; and was not a little astonished, in reading it, to find that so important a topic had been wholly passed over. It was necessary, however, that some conciliatory measures should be adopted. One of these would be the admission of the Catholic body to the privileges of the constitution; though there were many other causes of the disturbed state of that country. We were told that the intemperate warmth which appeared in the declamations of the Catholics of Ireland, rendered them unfit for the enjoyment of these privileges. But was it wonderful that, smarting under unjust exclusion, they should express their sense of that injustice in violent language? In their calmer moments, their lordships knew, they could come to their bar, and submit their claims for consideration in temperate and respectful terms. But remove the causes of the evil—remove the stigma which an unjust exclusion had left upon the people of Ireland—adopt measures of conciliation, and then there would be no occasion for this large military force. One reason for maintaining this force in Ireland was, that it was necessary, in aid of the magistrate and of the revenue officer, to check illicit distillation. But this employment was itself an additional objection. He did not like to see soldiers converted into parish constables: they would be opposed by strong parties: contests would ensue; and the hands of the soldiers would be stained with the blood of their countrymen, to the irreparable injury of the constitutional spirit of the army itself. It was incumbent, then, on their lordships to pause before they consented to the keeping up so large a military force in time of peace. There was surely no need for any such measure, with a view to the military character of the country. We might well be content with the military glory acquired, not only at Waterloo, but by so many victories at other places. Where, then, was the occasion for this large military peace establishment? What was our strong defence? Was it not in our insular situation, in our superior maritime strength, in our free constitution, and, above all, in the protection of Providence? Mr. Burke, in his speech on the Army Estimates, in February, 1790; had adverted to the love of standing armies, and the despotism which prevailed in France under Louis 14th; and had observed, "that the same character of despotism insinuated itself into every court of Europe." It were well if we now were properly alive to the consequences of so dangerous and alarming a disease.

Then, as to the taxes and burthens which must be imposed on the people to support so great an establishment, their lordships would remember what had been stated by a noble marquis on a former occasion—that the amount of taxes equalled half of the income of the country, landed and commercial. If the whole landed income were sold, the produce would hardly equal the national debt. Look, then, at the pressure upon the landed interest, first by direct taxes, such as the land tax, malt tax, and, above all, the property tax, and next by indirect taxes, such as those upon salt, soap, and other articles. Look at the enormous pressure upon all articles, not merely of luxury, but of necessary consumption. The load altogether was so great, that it might be said that we had come to the *ne plus ultra* of taxation; and yet the ministers were obstinately persevering in their intention to call for the renewal of the property tax, though the voice of the whole country, from one end to the other, was raised against it, and reprobated it above all other taxes, as partial, odious, oppressive, and inquisitorial. In the reign of Henry 4th, a similar tax was imposed on an occasion of the most urgent necessity. Their lordships would find the particulars in Hollinshed's Chronicles. But so afraid were the very authors of that imposition lest it should ever be drawn into precedent, that they ordered all the records of so abominable an imposition to be burnt, and no writs were permitted to be issued for the inquiries that might be useful in raising the tax, that even the memory of so horrible a measure might, if possible, be blotted out. If, then, at that remote period, when the constitution and liberties of the country were so ill defined and secured, they felt so great a repugnance to an imposition, should it be said that in these times the country would submit to it in time of peace, when the necessity was passed? He hoped not.

Then, as to the internal distresses of the country, it was surely unnecessary for him to say much to their lordships on that head. With these their lordships must be well acquainted, and therefore it was unnecessary for him to enumerate all that he and they knew. In many places the lands were out of cultivation. Upon two estates in Norfolk, lands in one instance of 5,000 acres, in another of 3,000 acres, were offered to tenants rent free, if they would cultivate them, but none would take them. The gaols were crowded with people unable to bear up against the pressure of the times. The farmers were imprisoned for debt, and the poorer classes, unable to procure subsistence in a legal way, became poachers and robbers of farm-yards; and the whole of the landed interest was in a condition horrible to think of. These were not the only sufferers. Many of the beneficed clergy were in a state of the utmost distress, as the right reverend prelates must very well know. The farmers were unable to pay their tithes, and many of the clergy were reduced to such extreme distress, that they could not even effect the annual insurances on their lives, which formed, in many cases, the only means by which they could secure a provision for their families.

A few words, then, as to the state of Ireland; and on that point he must speak with all that caution and diffidence which so delicate and important a subject required. But he apprehended that Ireland must for ever be in an unsettled state, until the catholics were admitted to the privileges of the constitution. He knew there were other causes of the evil, but it was only the more necessary to go into the committee, that the whole might be investigated. Even for the purpose of inquiring into the state of Ireland alone, and the causes of the evils which affected that country, and the most suitable remedies for them, their lordships ought to agree to take this course. But how overpowering and irresistible must all the reasons which he had stated appear to be when taken in the aggregate? The agricultural distresses in Ireland were as great, if not greater, than in this country, and this too loudly demanded investigation. In soliciting their lordships' attention to these important topics, he disclaimed all idea of throwing embarrassments in the way of ministers. He should be sorry, indeed, if he could be supposed capable of acting from so contemptible a motive. He wished the ministers to have every proper liberty to pursue their course, but he also wished that parliament should discharge with vigilance its constitutional duty of looking over them. These were Whig principles and his anxious wish was to see Whig principles universally prevalent with ministers, parliament, and people. They were the great land marks, the sure beacons, by which they ought to steer their course through all dangers and difficulties.

He trusted, therefore, that their lordships would consent to go into a committee on the state of the nation, and that the investigation would be conducted by all in a manner which would show that they studiously divested themselves of all party feelings, and that they were resolved to give the subject that impartial and serious consideration which its magnitude demanded. He was aware of the imperfect way in which he had brought forward this extensive question; but he felt consoled when he saw himself surrounded by so many noble lords much more capable of doing it justice. It was high time now to revert to the old and established principles and practice of the constitution; to reduce our military establishments to the lowest possible scale; to introduce the most rigid economy in all departments of the public service; to relieve the people from the pressure of almost intolerable burthens, which threatened to overwhelm all classes of the community in one common ruin. His grace concluded by moving, "That the House do resolve itself into a committee on the state of the nation."

The Duke of *Sussex* said, he would not take up much of the time of the House in delivering his sentiments, but he was anxious, in seconding the motion of the noble duke, to state those principles that guided his present conduct. There were two points of view under which the subject before the House presented itself—the state of the nation with regard to our foreign connexions, and with regard to our internal circumstances and resources. They could not well be separated in discussion, without leading to partial views and inapplicable results. A reference had been made to the sentiments of the nation on the property tax, and the proposed establishments, the most prominent subjects of present interest and discussion; and he thought that parliament did well in maturely weighing the recommendations that were made to it from all quarters. If the people were agitated, if their minds were excited by the feeling of present distress and alarm for future danger, it could not but conduce to their tranquillity and resignation to be told that their legislature were fully aware of their difficulties, and were anxious to take every practicable mode of removing them. In considering the origin of these difficulties, there could scarcely be a difference of opinion on the causes from which they proceeded. They might all be ultimately traced to the effects of the long protracted and arduous contest out of which we had lately come. A war of three and twenty years, and with such a powerful enemy, must necessarily have been productive of embarrassment and pressure in one part of its progress, or at its termination. Leaving out of view, however, the remote causes of our present unsatisfactory situation, his royal highness said, he would advert to those more immediately operative. He could not but consider as one of these the termination of the last war upon principles different from those on which it was undertaken. With all our pride of victory—and no nation had a more just title to entertain such a pride—with all the fame of our troops, victorious in so many engagements, we should not allow ourselves to be dazzled by the splendor of military glory, so as to lose sight of the proper and legitimate results of our unparalleled exertions. Even the battle of Waterloo, glorious and splendid as it was, was to be valued with reference to its consequences. What were those consequences? Had we obtained a permanent peace, with that alleviation of burthens which were anticipated from peace? Had we attained national security and commercial prosperity? Were new channels opened to our trade? and was there an extension of our manufacturing and commercial enterprise? His royal highness said, he did not mean to enter into any methodical discussion on these topics, as he was not much in the habit of addressing the House, and did not feel his competence to canvass subjects requiring such extensive information and reflection, but he would state his observations as they occurred. There were two points at which our commercial condition might be viewed: in the first place as it stood after the peace of Amiens, and as it existed at present. When the ambition of France led her to possess herself of all the continent, with the view of finally accomplishing our ruin, and the increasing animosity of Buonaparté compelled him to shut all the states, over which his influence extended, against the introduction of our manufactures, the government of this country retaliated by the orders in council. The continent of Europe was thus sealed against us; but colonies belonging to its various states fell naturally into our possession, and, to a certain extent, supplied the advantages of a market of which our inveterate enemy had deprived us. From the possession of those colonies arose our apparent prosperity at that period, and our present real distress. Now that peace had returned; now that we had restored many of those possessions to their former owners, and relaxed the restrictions on those that remained with us, trade had returned to its natural channels, and other states had come in for their share of its advantages. We could at present drive no trade as we had formerly done. We could not offer the same inducements to foreigners to buy our manufactures, nor were they in a condition to require them as they had hitherto done. We outsold all the world before the late war, because there was a greater accumulation of capital in the hands of our manufacturers than in those of any other nation; because our skill, and the extent of our machinery, were greater; and because, from these causes, we could afford articles of better quality, and at a more reasonable rate, than other nations could fabricate them for themselves. How did we stand now? Our taxes pressed upon the sources of capital, and prevented its increase or renewal, while they rendered it impossible that we could bring our manufactures so cheaply into the market, or sell them so advantageously, as we had formerly done. "Necessity was the mother of invention," according to the proverb; and that necessity had taught the states of the continent to supply themselves with many articles for which they formerly depended upon us. They could now make some articles better than ours: they made several nearly as good: many, he was willing to allow, they made much worse; but they could sell all at 25 to 50 per cent. cheaper than they could be afforded here. It might well be doubted, therefore, under these circumstances, whether the re-opening of these channels of trade formed any sufficient compensation for the loss of the colonial trade which we had monopolized during great part of the war.

His royal highness next adverted to the situation of our internal commerce, which, he said, was labouring under the greatest difficulties and embarrassments. The consumption of our manufactures at home was even more diminished than the demands of our foreign trade. From the distress of the farmer, and of those who derived their income from the profits of agriculture, they could not purchase from the tradesman or the merchant as formerly. The retail shop, from want of customers, was shut, and the commodities that filled it, not meeting with a market, were thrown back upon the manufacturer or wholesale dealer, whose capital was thus forced to remain unproductive, or was actually dilapidated.

Having said so much on the commerce of the country, the royal duke would advert briefly to the proposed establishments. The consideration of them naturally led him to give his opinion on the treaty which rendered a part of them necessary. When that treaty was signed, the sovereign of France was surrounded by foreign troops, and could not be said to exercise any liberty of choice. By this treaty 150,000 men were to be kept in France at the expense of the nation, and for the support of a sovereign whom the nation, if left to their choice, might renounce. The people were thus compelled to accept of a government at the dictation of strangers, who were obliged to send forces to carry into effect their improper interference. If a government could not be maintained without foreign aid, it should not be maintained at all. What must the subjects of the king of France think when they saw themselves surrounded by a line of foreign troops, and their sovereign, instead of standing between them, joining himself to strangers to oppose or oppress them? There were two points to be considered with regard to our establishments: whether we were to keep up a great military force, to the neglect of our navy? or whether we were to place our reliance on this bulwark of our strength, and reduce our army? His opinion was that which had been repeatedly expressed by lord Chatham, that our insular situation was our peculiar character, and the navy our natural defence. He therefore thought that our marines should not have been disbanded. Much had been said about a balance of power, and the influence which England should have in preserving that balance. He was of opinion that our navy, while it effected our own security, and placed us beyond the range of foreign interference, would enable us to exercise the greatest authority in the quarrels of states which could not embroil us. But, if we were to keep our navy, we must reduce our army, for the country could not support the burthen of both. He allowed all praise to our troops, and the gallant officers by whom they were commanded. He felt proud of their achievements, but he could never forget that it was natural for an Englishman to feel a certain constitutional jealousy of a standing army. A certain force was necessary for the security of the country; but so long as our government consulted the interests of the people, and retained their good opinion, that force, he was proud to say as an Englishman, might be fixed at a very diminished scale. Our yeomanry and militia were our proper and constitutional army. His royal highness said, he did not wish to embarrass his Majesty's ministers by frivolous opposition; but he would never cease to declare his opinion, when his views differed from those on which they acted. He reprobated the conduct of the states of Europe assembled in congress, in the ambition which several had displayed, and the rapacity with which they sacrificed the weak and the unresisting. The annexation of Norway to Sweden had formerly received his decided disapprobation, and if the accessary in the robbery of a kingdom was, like other accessaries, as guilty as the principal, then our government, which gave its sanction to that measure, was implicated in its criminality. Whatever might be his opinions, and however they might differ from those of government, he would express them with freedom. His royal highness concluded by seconding the noble duke's motion.

The Earl of *Aberdeen* could not agree to the motion of the noble duke, as he did not see any one good which would be produced thereby. The great objection which the noble duke had urged, and on which he had founded the necessity of the inquiry was, the large amount to which the military establishment was intended to be kept up. He did not mean to deny to their lordships, that the proposed establishment was greater than had been kept up at any former period of peace, and that in other circumstances it might justly be considered as enormous and dangerous; but it should be admitted, that an establishment to some extent was necessary, and the great question now was, to what extent should this establishment be carried? If the necessity for keeping it up to its present proposed amount were proved, he trusted their lordships would not withhold the sanction of their support from it. The noble duke who opened the debate, had objected to this establishment, that it was unconstitutional. Now, if he conceived it so, he would not support it; but he was convinced that the objection was not well-grounded. In the course of the last 20 years, the human mind had made such rapid progress in improvement, the opinions of men had risen to such a degree of independence, that little or no fears need now be entertained from an armed establishment, which would at that period have been truly dangerous. The view which he would take of the proposed establishment, should depend entirely on the present state of the country. The great object of the late peace had been to secure the permanent peace of Europe. That permanence must depend on the state of France, and the cordial union of the Great European powers. With regard to France, as affected by the late treaty, their lordships had already given their opinion. A great deal had been done towards securing the tranquillity of that country, but there still remained something more—namely, to preserve that tranquillity to which it had been restored. It was true that Napoleon Buonaparté was in our power, and thereby precluded from the possibility of further disturbance; but the mighty engine by which he had effected so much against the repose of Europe, was not yet rendered quite harmless. A great number of his supporters were still in France, and the seeds of future disturbance were not yet removed. In this state of things, the union of the four great powers was of the utmost consequence to the continuance of that repose which had been established by the late treaty. That union depended principally on the preponderance of England; for if she had less weight with the European powers, she could effect very little towards keeping up the harmony which now subsisted between them, and which, in their present state, with their several countries covered with armed troops, who were not restrained by those salutary checks operating on the disposal of English forces, might be easily broken, if she had less power to prevent it. On the whole, he trusted that the necessity of this preponderance would appear to their lordships. Without it England would be nothing in the European scale with it she would be every thing which the just support of the balance of power required. It had been said, that the true policy of England consisted in confining herself to her insular situation. He could not assent to such doctrine; for if England had done so, she would never have arrived at that pre-eminent station which she now held among the powers of Europe. He had before observed to their lordships, that it was the interest of this country to preserve as much as possible the balance of power; this had long been the object of her most strenuous exertions, and one effect of those exertions, and not the least important one, was, that she had established a high character with the other powers—a character formed upon her valour, her fortitude, her perseverance, and above all her moderation in conquest—a character which would ever render her respected, because she would be known to possess the means of making herself so. Justice was armed, and her power of doing good depended not less on her inclination than her ability. He hoped, therefore, their lordships would concur with him in seeing that the proposed military establishment was not less than was necessary for the maintenance of that peace which had been established in Europe. If that peace was a good one, it would be unwise and impolitic to deprive ourselves at once of the means of reaping its advantages; which we could never hope to do, unless we were able to maintain it.—With regard to the application in different stations, of this establishment, he did not think it necessary to take up the time of their lordships, particularly as the noble duke who spoke first, had touched but lightly on this subject. But he was certain that if their lordships looked to the vast extension of our empire, and the nature of our foreign possessions, they would not conceive the amount for them too much. The noble duke who moved the question, had mentioned the distresses of the county. He did not deny that the country was distressed. It had been called upon to make great sacrifices; but he did not think it would be prudent to lose the advantages which must result from those sacrifices by a mistaken idea of economy. It was to be recollected, that the proposed military establishment was not intended as a permanent one. It would be reduced considerably in the course of a little time. Besides, though the country was distressed, it was not in that bad state which had been stated. The noble duke had mentioned the pressure of the property tax. Now to him the tax did not appear more severe on the country than a loan, or any other mode of raising the supplies, which circumstances rendered necessary. As to the state of Ireland, he thought the noble duke was too well informed of the situation of that country to object to the proposed establishment. The disturbances of Ireland did not appear to result from the distresses consequent upon the war, but from the ignorant state of its peasantry. The evils under which Ireland laboured might, he trusted, be removed by the proper instruction and education of the lower classes, by which they would acquire habits of industry and order.

The Earl of *Limerick* said, he would not have addressed their lordships, on this occasion, but for what had fallen from the noble duke who introduced the motion, relative to Ireland. The opinion of the noble duke on the state of that country, must, from the high situation he had held there, be entitled to very great attention. Before he entered on the subject, he would assure their lordships, that he meant to follow the advice given by the noble duke, and, in discussing the question, he would abstain from any thing bordering on party violence. The state of that unfortunate, he might say, without reference to this or that administration, but, for a series of ages, that ill-used country, was too notorious to render it necessary for him to take up their lordships' time with the description of it. The noble duke had stated that Ireland was treated like a conquered country. If having a military establishment to restrain party violence, to enforce obedience to the laws, to guard the revenue, and to protect the well-affected in their lives and properties—if that was treating Ireland like a conquered country, then in Heaven's name, let it continue so to be governed. He thought it was not dealing with Ireland as a conquered nation. On the contrary, he was of opinion, that ministers would be guilty of neglecting the duty they owed to their sovereign, their country, and themselves, if they did not use those powers which the constitution armed them with, for the purpose of repressing tumult and disorder.—The noble duke had observed, that a system of conciliation would have a better effect than the introduction of 25,000 bayonets. He agreed with the noble duke that, at all times, it was better to govern by conciliation than by force. But, did the noble duke think, for an instant, that Catholic emancipation would immediately still those troubles? Feeling every deference for the noble duke, he must say, that, when he made such a declaration, he libelled the Catholic population of Ireland. Magistrates were murdered, and houses were plundered—but the Catholics, as a body, had nothing to do with that. He was persuaded those excesses arose from the violence of half-civilized peasants, urged on by a set of villains, who, he trusted, would be ultimately unmasked. This system had succeeded in creating one rebellion, which was supported as well by Protestants as by Catholics.—The noble duke had complained that the soldiers in Ireland were employed in collecting the revenue, which he considered a degradation. But, in this country, highly civilized as it was, the army were employed in the same manner, and must be so employed, and no one conceived that the duty was disgraceful. They were, even in this country, sometimes opposed—and they were obliged, on such occasions, to tinge their bayonets in the blood of those who acted thus illegally. He certainly did not approve of the manner in which the fines were imposed in Ireland, for illicit distillation, by which the innocent and the guilty suffered alike. No man was more hostile to illicit distillation than he was; but he felt that it was contrary to all principles of law and justice, to inflict punishment on the innocent as well as on the guilty. He knew, in many districts, the cattle of the peasants were sold, in consequence of fines imposed on townlands, for illicit distillation, with which the sufferers had nothing to do. But, it was said, "This is not unjust: why do not those persons give information of private stills?" They dared not make this discovery; the penalty of death hung over them, if they came forward with information. The noble earl then proceeded to point out, briefly, the necessity of simplifying the tithe system. At present there was an uncertainty in the mode which prevented the peasant from knowing how to act. He could not, of course, be very strongly attached to the Protestant clergyman, whom he considered a sort of intruder, particularly when he had to pay his Roman Catholic pastor. He was, in fact, obliged to support two establishments—he paid in a double proportion.—The noble duke had spoken of the state of agriculture in Ireland. It was with grief, the earl of Limerick observed, that it was in a state of absolute ruin. The industrious could obtain no employment; and thus, a great part of the population being unoccupied, were easily induced to commit acts of lawless atrocity. But they must look far beyond the occurrences of the present day, if they wished to discover the source of the evil. It had arisen from the system of government adopted for hundreds of years. He would not go over the horrible story of the sufferings of that unhappy country, for a series of ages. The period of the revolution, of 1688, by which the rights and liberties of England were established, was to Ireland an era of grief, degradation, and sorrow. He would not enter into an examination of the principles of those who adhered to the proscribed House of

Stuart: he would not say, whether their conduct was proper or not, but he would come at once to the acts of king William. The House of Commons took alarm at the introduction of Irish cattle into England, as likely to destroy the business of the English grazier. They soon looked farther, and protested against the continuance of the Irish woollen manufacture, as injurious to the interests of England. And finally, it was demanded, that Irish corn should not be exported to England. What did king William say, in his speech from the throne, on these points?—"My faithful Commons," said he, "need not be alarmed; I will take effectual steps to prevent the interests of England, whether with respect to corn, cattle, or the woollen manufacture, being injured by Ireland." What was the result? Trade grew worse and worse. The country fell into contempt. It was ruled by a few petty squires, who, provided they were themselves permitted to domineer a little, would patiently suffer their country to be degraded by England. So humbled was the country, that, in the reign of George 1st an act was passed, declaring, that England had a right to bind Ireland, in all things, and under all circumstances. At length the American war rendered it necessary to withdraw the forces stationed in Ireland for her protection. The regular number was 25,000 men, but not more than 6 or 7,000 remained in that country. The people of Ireland called for protection; but, like the Britons, when under the Roman government, they were told "to protect themselves." They did so. The country bristled up in arms—the French navy might ride on her coasts, but not a Frenchman dared to set his foot on her shores! What followed? The rents could not be paid, without the assistance of commerce—and the people of Ireland said, "We must have our commercial rights restored, as the reward of our bravery and of the attachment we have shown to Great Britain." This country complied with the request, and Ireland received her long-lost commercial privileges. The French Revolution at length broke out, and the horrible infatuation of religious quarrels infected Ireland. The whole country was in a ferment, which at last ended in a dreadful rebellion. They then had a recourse (and they were obliged to adopt the plan, for the sake of security) to that Union, which their lordships offered. He felt some difficulties on the subject—he did not like to sacrifice an independent legislature—but it was given up. From that union, excellent as it was, many evils had arisen. Amongst others, the weight of taxation was severely felt. A few years ago, Ireland was, in that respect, the happiest country in the universe. Their lordships, who were accustomed to talk of an annual expenditure of a hundred and twenty millions, would smile when he told them that the expenditure of Ireland was then only one million. But, in the short space of fifteen or sixteen years, a debt had been accumulated, the annual interest of which nearly absorbed the whole of her revenue. The taxation was enormous. It was seven times the amount of what it was before. Taking the most liberal and comprehensive view of the subject, he conceived, that the situation of Ireland called for inquiry.—The noble earl then adverted to the system of grand jury taxation, which he stated to be one of the greatest engines of oppression, and therefore demanded peculiar consideration. He strongly enforced the necessity of compelling the superior and inferior clergy to reside on their livings, where, though they would not, probably, make many proselytes, they could do much towards civilizing the country, and raising it from that state of semi-barbarism in which it was at present sunk. He said, he was deeply interested in the welfare of the country—he wished it well—and hoped that government would adopt effectual means for removing the evils which now pressed heavily on it. If a proper course were pursued, Ireland, instead of being a source of weakness to Great Britain, would soon be looked to as one of her best bulwarks in the hour of necessity. It could not be expected, that those evils could be removed on the spur of the moment; but with care and attention they would ultimately vanish. In the present state of Ireland, he must say that he did not think the establishment proposed was too much—he doubted whether it was sufficient.

The Marquis of *Buckingham* congratulated his noble friend on such an acquisition of strength to the support of his motion, as the noble earl who had just sat down. After the clear and eloquent statement which that noble earl had delivered, he would put it to their lordships, whether, laying their hands on their hearts, they could declare on their honour, that the state of Ireland was not such as to call for speedy and strict inquiry. It was evident from the eloquent speech of the noble earl, that Ireland was oppressed, and the advantage of the inquiry into its present state would be not only to see whether the proposed establishment was too much, for he (the marquis of B.) admitted, that a large force was necessary in that country for the suppression of disturbance; but to see whether other means could not be resorted to for securing the affections of the people and ameliorating their condition. In this inquiry he hoped to have the vote of the noble earl, who had shown himself so well acquainted with the real state of Ireland, and the causes of its present distress. The committee of their lordships would have an opportunity of ascertaining what other modes of relieving Ireland might be devised than that which was at present acted upon—what hopes might be held out to the people of that country that they were not to be kept for ever in a state of subjection. That other measures than the present were necessary no one could deny who had heard the speech of the noble earl who spoke last. Would it not be better to act towards the people of Ireland, as had been done in the American war, when they had proved what confidence could be reposed in them, than to send at once an army of 25,000 men to legislate amongst them in time of peace? It had been said, that Ireland would be relieved by the education of the lower classes. This certainly would have its good effect, but it would not be of much service to the present inhabitants of that country. It would be proposing a benefit for children yet unborn, while their fathers would be suffered to continue in their practice of murdering magistrates, and carding tythe proctors to death. The present was the best time for any thing which could be done for the relief of Ireland. Some prompt and decisive measures were necessary; and if these were resorted to, they would facilitate the other plan of educating the lower classes of the inhabitants. As to the general question of inquiry into the state of the country, he conceived that never was there a time at which it was more necessary. He could well believe that in time of war or great public danger, when the disclosure of the real state of the country might, by becoming known, afford information to our enemy; in such a case there might be a fair ground of objection to inquiry, but at present no such ground existed. We were at peace with the world, and the disclosure of our real state must be of service, but could be of no injury. It was necessary that their lordships should know why, after a war of twenty-five years continuance, and the conclusion of a peace, the country should not enjoy the blessings of peace? Why the temple of Janus, which was now shut, should be still surrounded with thousands of troops? Why that great terror of our ancestors, a standing army, should be kept up at a time when a peace with all Europe rendered their services unnecessary? Why promises of economy should only be followed up by practising extravagance? It was necessary for their lordships to inquire into these signs of the times. To know why these signs existed. Why, when the clouds had passed over and the horizon was become clear, when the lightnings which had played once over our heads had fallen without injury, when our greatest enemy was subdued and in our power, when a peace which had been gained by our exertions, was guaranteed by all the great powers of Europe, bound together by the most indissoluble ties—it was necessary for their lordships and the country to know, why after all this, we should not enjoy the advantages of peace? They could only do so by consenting to go into the committee. He had lately seen a history of James 2nd, by the librarian to his royal highness the Prince Regent, which contained, amongst copies of other documents, a letter from that infatuated monarch to his son upon the nature of government, in which he observes, that it was such laws as the Habeas Corpus act that rendered a large military force necessary to keep the people in order. He had now lived to hear a doctrine scarcely less preposterous, namely, that an increased population required an increased military establishment. But why was the original destination of the militia forgotten? What had they done, that their services must be dispensed with? If they could be no longer confided in, why were they still kept up, and the expense incurred? But they were not merely still maintained, but increased; and the only object of a standing army appeared to him to be to keep down the people, the militia, and the local militia together. With regard to the assertion, that the West India colonies required this increase of military force, he saw no ground for it. We could not have those possessions but by conquest. If we had them by conquest it must have been from an enemy; and if from an enemy, we deprived them of so many military possessions, which should render a reduction rather than an increase of force necessary on our part. The noble marquis also contended, that this increase of force could not be rendered necessary from any fear of the blacks in the West Indies, for if we had so much benefitted them by the abolition of the slave trade, we had now little to dread. The same arguments could be used against any increase in our possessions in the Mediterranean. If we had given to those people over whom we had got the command the benefits of the British constitution, we had no occasion to keep up a large force to control them. This was particularly applicable to the Ionian islands. But the great object seemed to be, not what these possessions were worth to the country, but what patronage they might afford to the Crown — whether a lieutenant-general, commissary, or some other officer of that description, might be sent out there. Against whom were these islands to be defended? Not against Russia; for it was the influence of Russia that placed them under our protection. The only object that we could have in occupying them, was that of increasing our military establishment; that the whole system might be of a piece. Let the House look at the East Indies. And in mentioning that part of the world, he hoped their lordships would excuse him while he so far diverged from the subject before them, as to breathe a sigh over that dispensation of Providence, by which in the death of the late noble president of the board of control (the earl of Buckinghamshire) to whom he had been most warmly attached by every feeling of personal regard and affection, the Crown had been deprived of a most able and faithful servant, and every one who knew him of a zealous and sincere friend [Hear, hear!]. But to revert to the East Indies. Did any one know why the late war in that country had been undertaken? Did any one know what had been gained by it? As to the statement, that our army there were to be paid by the East India company, he trusted, that their lordships were not at that time of day to be so deluded. The situation of the company was not such as to afford the shadow of a prospect that a single man of that army would be paid by them. With respect to the West India colonies, it appeared by the estimates, that the troops now intended to be sent to them, were greater in amount than the number maintained in them in the years 1814 and 1815, when we were at war, and at war with America. In 1814, the garrisons of the West India islands amounted to 12,125 men; in 1815, to 12,442 men. It was now proposed to send 13,000 men. Indeed, the whole amount of the proposed estimates in this time of peace, exceeded the amount of the estimates in every year of war from the year 1759, to the year before the peace of Amiens. [The noble marquis here read a list of the sums voted for the army estimates in the various years to which he had alluded, and which fully established his assertion]. To such a picture as that, what could be added? Which of their lordships could hesitate to say, that it ought not to be made the subject of grave and immediate inquiry? So it was with respect to the state of our finances. The surplus revenue, after the payment of the interest of the debt, was ten millions. Thirty millions, however, were required by the minister for the service of the year. How were the twenty millions of deficiency to be provided? Were we not in a situation, in which, if we maintained the proposed establishment, we should deprive ourselves of the means of carrying on a future war, whenever the necessity for it should occur, since we even found it difficult to supply the deficiency of the revenue in time of peace? The speech from the throne recommended economy. How could that recommendation be carried into effect without going into a committee to inquire how economy could be best practised? Let their lordships answer the call. The only symptoms which his majesty's ministers had evinced of a disposition to attend to the advice which they had themselves put into the mouth of the Prince Regent, was to be found in the increase of the salaries of the board of excise, in the increase of the salaries of the board of customs and in the increase of the salaries of the board of taxes; and as the last specimen of their sincerity, in the order of council, issued, he believed, since the meeting of parliament, by which the salary of the secretary of the Admiralty, which being 4000*l.* a-year in time of war, ought, according to the existing regulations, to be reduced to 2,500*l.* in time of peace, was to be continued at the former rate! With all this before their lordships eyes, was it possible, that they would refuse to go into an inquiry into the state of the nation? The attention of the people was directed towards them. If their lordships rejected his noble friend's motion, they would desert the duty which, as the hereditary counsellors of the Crown, they owed to the Crown and to the country; and would do much towards the verification of the assertion, that England would never be destroyed but by her parliament.

The Earl of *Blessington* thought it was premature to enter into a discussion of the military establishment of the country before the army estimates were properly before the House. His noble friend in bringing forward this subject, had divided it into three parts: first, with respect to the peace establishment; next to the distresses of the agricultural interests; and lastly, to the state of Ireland. With respect to the peace establishment, he had on a former evening stated, that it had his approval, because it was but for one year, and because he thought that while the present state of parties did exist in France, it was necessary for us to have a large force in that country, and with a view to rendering assistance to that force, if occasion required, to keep up a similar force at home. He approved of the regular army, because the militia was not so easily called into action in a moment of emergency. With regard to the establishment of a military force in time of peace, he did not conceive that our liberties were at all endangered by such an establishment, the more especially when it was considered, that fifty thousand only was applicable to Great Britain. It was but a poor compliment to those men, who had been so long and so arduously engaged in the defence of their own liberties, and in the emancipation of Europe from the grossest despotism, to bring against them such a charge. With regard to the state of Ireland, he thought that this country had been too strongly calumniated by the noble earl who spoke last but one. That country wanted but the affection of this, to render it all that was desirable. With respect to the military occupation of Ireland, he thought from the soldiers being quartered up and down, that it would materially serve the landholders, who would thereby obtain a consumption for their meat, which it was known was not in very general demand in any part of that country. The noble earl had talked of the union. For his part, he considered that the great misfortunes of Ireland had arisen out of that measure, and its baneful consequences had been felt to the present day. With the loss of parliament, that country had lost the society which had previously tended so much towards its prosperity. The noble earl in his comments upon that country, had, he thought, been too general in his remarks; and when he talked of turbulence and tumult, could only have meant certain districts, and evidently laboured under a mistake, when he included the whole of that country in his animadversions. The property tax was certainly not a tax applicable to Ireland; but if the peace establishment was considered necessary, he certainly thought some mode of raising the means of defraying the expense ought to be suggested. He disapproved of the tax, and thought it ought only to be resorted to in a case of extreme necessity. With regard to the agricultural interests, he fully agreed that the distresses which prevailed among the landholders and farmers were very great; yet he did not think the inquiry proposed would be productive of any good. Such distresses were the natural consequence of a sudden change from war to peace; and he had no doubt that after a short time the evil would correct itself.

The Earl of *Limerick* protested against the charge which had been made against him of calumniating the character of Ireland: he denied that any thing had dropped from him which could warrant such a conclusion, and expressed a hope, that the noble lord would not use so harsh an epithet, when applied to any thing which might fall from him in future.

The Earl of *Blessington*, in explanation, said, he had not used the word 'calumniate' in an offensive sense towards the noble earl, but merely alluded to the effect which the noble lord's speech must have had upon the House.

Earl *Bathurst* contended, that to refer the consideration of all our foreign relations and all our domestic concerns, extensive and multitudinous as they were, to a committee of inquiry could produce no practical good; and that the only tendency of an acquiescence in such a proposition, would be wantonly and uselessly to agitate the public mind. With great deference to the opinions of the noble duke and the noble marquis, he must say, that if he entertained a distrust of any ministers—if he considered them incompetent to the due discharge of their duties

—he would not consent to any such committee as that proposed by the noble duke, for he should conceive the best, and indeed the only proper course would be, to move an address to the throne, praying for the removal of those ministers; or for the adoption of a system of policy different from that which they had pursued. If such an address were disregarded, it might then be for their lordships to consider the propriety of going into a committee on the state of the nation; but even in that event there were other modes of proceeding to which, in his opinion, it would be much more advisable to resort. The noble duke had stated a variety of grounds on which he maintained that it was fitting their lordships should accede to his proposition. One of the principal subjects which the noble duke wished to refer to the consideration of the committee was, the proposed military establishment. After the notice which had been yesterday given by a noble marquis of his intention to bring this subject under the consideration of their lordships on Friday next, he confessed his surprise at its being deemed necessary by the noble duke to refer it to the consideration of the committee, for which he had that night moved. The noble marquis had given notice of his intention to move an address to the throne, representing the expediency of a reduction in the proposed establishments. This was enough to show that the noble marquis was prepared—that he had made up his mind on the subject—that the papers on their lordships' table were amply sufficient to elucidate it —and therefore it appeared singular that under such circumstances, the noble duke should think the nature of those establishments a fit subject to be comprehended in the inquiries of the committee which he had proposed. As the question was so soon to be brought before their lordships for discussion, he would abstain from entering minutely into it. But still, he thought it necessary to make a few observations on what had fallen from the noble duke and the noble marquis.

The noble duke seemed to be of opinion, that, on the conclusion of a peace, it was desirable an immediate change of system should take place, and that we should withdraw and disband nearly the whole of our regular troops. To this doctrine so able and complete an answer had been given by his noble friend near him (the earl of Aberdeen), that little could be added on the subject. He would merely observe, that when the noble duke advanced this principle, he must have forgotten that it was annually disclaimed by parliament. For the preamble of the mutiny bill, a yearly measure, distinctly stated, that a standing army was necessary to preserve the balance of power, &c. If, therefore, the principle of the noble duke, that on the termination of war the system of employing regular troops should be altogether changed, were admitted, it would be necessary to propose an alteration in the preamble of the mutiny bill, in which the expediency of a different line of conduct was proclaimed. With respect to the policy of thus entirely reducing our military force, it appeared to him to be very obvious, that it was calculated to defeat its own object. Nothing was more likely to insure a continuance of peace, than an exhibition of the means of renewing war with vigour, if necessary. There was no way more likely to prevent attack than to show that there existed the power of immediately repelling it. Among other arguments that had been urged to impress on their lordships the inexpediency of keeping up a large military force was this —that if a principal object of doing so was to preserve the internal tranquillity of the country, to the attainment of that object the militia were perfectly competent. But if it was intended in its constitution that the militia should be competent to this purpose, it was very astonishing that the character of the militia should make it impossible to render it available to that purpose, as it was well known that in peace it could be embodied only for a limited time.

Various misrepresentations had taken place on the subject of the military establishments. He would notice one which related to their expense. This expense the noble marquis had contended was enormous, in comparison with the military establishments of former periods: and, in support of this argument, the noble marquis had detailed the expense of the military establishments of this country during a long series of years, commencing with the year 1759, and ending with the year before the conclusion of the peace of Amiens. But, in doing this, the noble marquis had failed to advert to the difference in the pay of the soldier and in the expense of maintaining him since the period which he had quoted. This was a wonderful omission. The fact was, that the pay was doubled. The dead expenses (as they were termed), independently of any expense of the army itself, amounted to two millions annually; and if at that moment the whole of the regular army were to be disbanded—if not a single red coat were to be seen from one extremity of the empire to the other—our military expenditure, including the pensions, &c. would, nevertheless, be equal to the military expenditure in lord Chatham's war. When, therefore, the noble marquis compared things, between which no fair comparison could possibly be instituted, it was something like trifling with the House.

He had thought it necessary to touch thus generally on the question of our military establishments, reserving himself for more minute observations when the subject should be distinctly under their lordships' consideration. He would proceed to make some remarks of a more particular nature on the other topics introduced by the noble duke and the noble marquis. And, first, with respect to Ireland. It had been argued, that the situation of Ireland was a fit subject for inquiry by the proposed committee on the state of the nation. Now, really if the situation of Ireland was such as it had been represented to be, the proper course would be to move for a committee on the state of Ireland alone, and not to divert their lordships' attention from that very important subject, by mingling it with the very comprehensive affairs that would come under their consideration in a committee on the state of the nation. The more completely the noble lords proved that the situation of Ireland was such as to require parliamentary investigation, the more completely they proved that it ought not to be referred to such a committee as that now proposed. If the situation of Ireland required their lordships attention, it certainly required their undivided attention. And before any such inquiry were entered into, it would be most prudent to guard against raising expectations of a beneficial result that must be eventually disappointed. It would be most desirable to know what would be the precise measures objected to, and what would be the precise measures proposed in such a committee, in order that their lordships might avoid the apprehension of going into an investigation, out of which they would feel that they must come without having been enabled to adopt any proposition of an advantageous tendency. Was catholic emancipation one of the topics which the noble lords would recommend to be discussed in the committee on the state of the nation? This was a very important question. It had already been frequently debated by their lordships. It might be so again; and that certainly in a form much more convenient than by uniting it to subjects with which it had no natural connexion; such as our military establishments, or our foreign relations. Whenever the noble duke, or the noble marquis, or any other noble lord, chose to make a motion on the subject, it was perfectly competent to him to do so; but that to which he objected was, the appointment of a committee for a general purpose, in order to discuss in that committee this particular consideration. Was the question of tithes in Ireland one of those subjects into which it was proposed this committee on the state of the nation should inquire? Surely this was a topic their lordships would unwillingly discuss, unless they entertained a confident hope of arriving at some sound conclusion. When the state of Ireland, and when the nature of these tithes and of all the circumstances connected with them were considered, he was persuaded their lordships would think with him, that to raise a question with respect to them without the assurance of being enabled to adopt some very satisfactory measures, would be the most pernicious course that could be adopted. And what expectation could their lordships at that time rationally entertain of the successful issue of an inquiry of that kind? The noble duke had himself stated, that when he was lord lieutenant of Ireland, the subject of tithes was the one which was the most frequently on his mind, that it was the one which he was most anxious if possible to adjust, and even that at one period he entertained the most sanguine expectations with respect to it; but that notwithstanding all his attention, notwithstanding all his solicitude, notwithstanding all his hopes, he found it impracticable to devise any measure that in his opinion would remedy the existing evils. If, therefore, the noble duke, with all the advantages which his high station had given him, with all the means of extensive information which he possessed, with all his disposition on the subject, had been unable to effect the desired object, surely their lordships would be cautious how they approached it, and how, with so little prospect of a fortunate result, they stirred a question, the agitation of which, if nothing effectual could be accomplished, might be productive of much serious mischief.

He would next advert to the military force of 25,000 men, which it was proposed to maintain in Ireland. The noble duke had contended that this force was unnecessary, and that it was treating Ireland like a conquered country. Any one who had for the first time heard the arguments on this subject would conceive that this was a new proposition—that it was something very extravagant, to which the people of Ireland were not at all accustomed. What were the facts? there had been maintained in Ireland for the last ten years a military force (including militia) of 40,000 men. This force had been kept up during the time that the noble duke was lord lieutenant of that country. The present proposition of his majesty's government was—not to maintain the same force in peace as in war, but to reduce that force by 15,000 men—to reduce it to 25,000. After having maintained so large a force in Ireland for so many years, was there any thing in this proposal of a reduction calculated to awaken the suspicion of parliament? Was there any thing in it that showed the condition of Ireland was becoming so much worse as to render it expedient for their lordships to go into a committee on the state of the nation, for the purpose of investigating that condition? The argument derived from the circumstance of our having been at war during the time that 40,000 troops were maintained in Ireland, was very much weakened by the consideration, that they were not used in such a way as to evince that they were intended to resist any external attack. Instead of being kept in masses, as in that case they would have been, they were actually divided into 450 stations; and thus parcelled out with no other object than to aid the civil power by enforcing the execution of the laws, and by protecting the magistrates who were engaged in that execution. In the year 1814, at which time we were at peace, except with America (from which country no invasion of Ireland was to be dreaded), this force of 40,000 men was in Ireland. The subject was distinctly brought under their lordships' consideration; for, in order to maintain that force to the full amount, it was necessary to keep up the militia, and the question arose, whether that militia, which was called out in war, could legally be kept up in peace. That question was discussed by their lordships. The justification urged by his majesty's ministers for keeping up the militia was, that the force which he had mentioned was necessary for the preservation of the peace in Ireland. Their lordships had the whole case before them, with all its bearings and circumstances; and they agreed that the necessity justified the keeping up in time of peace that militia which had been called out in time of war. All this plainly proved, that it was no new system that was proposed regarding Ireland. The system of which the proposed plan was a modification, had existed for many years; and, having existed for many years, he was at a loss to conceive the wisdom of that suggestion, which, in the very first year of peace, would abruptly dissolve the whole force in the country.

He would proceed to make a few observations on another topic which had been dwelt upon with much emphasis on the present occasion—he meant the great and undeniable agricultural distresses; the existence of which had been assigned as an additional reason for their lordships to go into a committee on the state of the nation. He could assure their lordships, that he had not the slightest disposition to under-rate the extent of those distresses. But he must say, that he did not think their reference to a committee on the state of the nation would be the best mode of treating them. It was notorious, that no war had ever terminated without occasioning distresses of this description. It was notorious, that after the close of the war in 1763, and after the close of the war in 1782, similar distresses had occurred; and, therefore, the existing distresses, however they might excite regret, ought not to occasion surprise. The natural effect of all wars, by preventing the importation of foreign produce was, to increase the demand for domestic. When the war ceased, the increased demand ceased with it. In proportion to the extent of the war was the embarrassment felt. In a short war, the increased demand being but partial, the distress on its cession was partial. In a protracted war, the increased demand becoming general, the distress on its cessation was general. Beginning with the occupiers of the land, it gradually spread itself to those who were directly, and afterwards to those who were indirectly, connected with them. A great cause of the present distress among those connected with the agricultural interests was to be found in the reduced demand for the army and navy. In 1813, the amount of the victualling of the army and navy for Great Britain was two millions—for Ireland it was one million. In addition to this there was the maintenance of the prisoners of war, amounting to near a million; so that at that time there was a domestic demand for four millions of British produce. In 1815 that demand fell to less than two millions. Was not this calculated to produce a great effect on those who were exposed to the fluctuation? and the identical persons, namely, the occupiers of land, who were the first gainers by any increase in the demand for their produce, were of course the first losers by any diminution in that demand. In addition to this there were other circumstances which combined to produce the distresses in question. There were two reasons for the reduction of prices; the diminution of demand, and the increase of supply. Now in the year 1814, there had been large importations from France and other countries, and the produce thus imported was disposed of in this country, at a rate which undersold the native, not because we wanted the foreign produce, but because the foreigner wanted our money. For his own part, he doubted whether before the lapse of a twelvemonth this evil would not be remedied. He believed that this country produced at present not more than the demand—perhaps less. If so, in a short time the supply would not be equal to the demand. The consequence of that would be an increase of price, and the consequence of that again would be an increase of cultivation; until at length the demand and the supply would be equalized. The only very injurious effect which the taxes had on the agriculture of the country was, that, in some degree, they diminished the demand for the produce. But he could by no means allow, that in this respect the agricultural distresses of the present period were so severe as those of former periods. On the contrary, he was persuaded that the present agricultural distresses, after a war of twenty-one years, were not so great as the agricultural distresses had been after a war of five, and a war of seven years. There was one very material difference in the cases. In 1783 the distresses of the agricultural interest were very great, and they had this circumstance of aggravation, that additional taxes to the amount of a million were imposed at the very time those distresses were the most felt. In 1763, under similar circumstances, additional taxes to the amount of 200,000*l.*, chiefly bearing on the agricultural interest, were imposed. What was the case at present? That the country would pay in the next year seven millions, or seven millions and half, or near eight millions, less than it had done the year before! Was not this a marked feature of distinction between the cases? In the two first instances, taxation was increased; in the last, taxation was diminished. The agricultural interest next year would have three millions less to pay out of their pockets than they had the year before. The three millions which the agricultural interest would have to pay less in the next year was three-fourths of the whole revenue of one of the periods to which he had alluded; and the eight millions which the country at large would pay less, was equal to the whole revenue of the other period. The noble marquis opposite might say that this comparison of sums, the relative value of which at different periods was very different, was unfair; but that was the mode which the noble marquis had chosen to adopt in comparing the military expenditure of different periods. If the noble marquis was right in the one case, then he (earl Bathurst) was right in the other. He would not trouble their lordships any further; but would sit down with the firm conviction that they would not acquiesce in the proposition made by the noble duke.

The Earl of *Caernarvon* reprobated the doctrine, that parliament must not inquire into the state of the nation because it would show a distrust of ministers, and take the task out of their hands. Ministers! What had they to do with the question? Had ministers been able to discover that any distresses existed? What did they do on the very first day of the session? Had they in their own persons expressed, or had they recommended the Prince Regent to express a sense of the distresses of the country, and a determination to take into consideration the best means of relieving them? No; but they had promised to visit those distresses with continued taxation and a standing army. When such magnificent expectations were held out by his majesty's ministers, it was very proper indeed to refuse a parliamentary inquiry! In truth, the arguments just urged by the noble earl against inquiry at the present moment, would be equally applicable against inquiry at any time. With respect to what were called the agricultural distresses, but which, in fact were general distresses, pervading every class and description of the community, enough had been stated to show that their lordships ought to go into a committee on the subject, even if their inquiries with a view to a remedy should be fruitless. In his opinion, one of the great causes of the present distresses had been the depreciated currency. A great portion of that currency, with which those concerned with agriculture had the most to do, had been the issue of private banks. This bubble, while the breeze lasted, floated gaily on the surface of the stream, but when the favouring gale ceased, the bubble burst, and general calamity ensued. Notwithstanding the reluctance expressed by his majesty's ministers, on every occasion, to enter into an examination of the portentous military establishments, it was a subject so important in a constitutional and political point of view, so connected with our financial concerns, and the force was so disproportionate to the exigencies of the times, that he should feel that he failed in his duty if he abstained from making a few comments upon it. And first with respect to the assertion, that we ought to maintain a commanding military attitude in Europe. How did it happen to escape those who made that assertion, that the most fortunate times of our interference in the continent was, when he had done so without departing from our insular policy, and without keeping up a standing army in time of peace? It ought also to be recollected, that in the last war the military powers on the continent, to whose system it was now considered so desirable to approximate, had all been broken up, while the armies of Great Britain, originally the least military power of all the contending nations, had rapidly grown up, and had never been seriously injured.—Did it not occur to the noble lords opposite, that if we wished to maintain our present proud attitude, we could not do it better than by returning to the good old policy of our ancestors? That policy had produced those splendid results, which embellished every page of our national history; and when he looked back upon those results, was he not justified in assuming, that one great cause of the superior character of the British army arose from the circumstance that it was called out only in a time of danger, that it sprung from the bosom of the people, and that when the danger was over, it returned again to the bosom of the people? In time of peace we kept up no great army, but we cherished the spirit of a great nation, which was always capable of producing a great army.—With respect to the dangers to be apprehended from large military establishments, he would defy the noble lords opposite to produce a single instance in ancient or modern history, of a great standing army being co-existent with a free constitution, in which the constitution did not perish. If it was to be contended that the republics and free states of antiquity did not understand the nature of liberty so well as we did, he would bid them look to the history of modern times. Let them revert back to the feudal periods, when, upon the commencement of a war, the nobility marched at the head of their feudal vassals; from the moment that system ceased, and standing armies took its place, there was an end of liberty. Let them even remember the transactions in our country during the civil wars. There were then, indeed, two armies opposed to each other; but in the end one of them gained the ascendancy, and became a standing army. What was the consequence? It was not long before military committees were formed to transact the business of the state; it was not long before a body of soldiers removed from the House of Commons a bauble similar to that now on the woolsack; it was not long before that standing army elected its own general to the office of chief magistrate of the country. And yet they were to be told, that no danger was to be apprehended from a standing army in modern times. As to the loyalty and honour of the British army, no one thought more highly of them than he did; but he could not think they would do well if they trusted their liberties to the guardianship of that army. Our ancestors never acted so, and he was contented to follow their example. He would venture to assert, that if we continued to confine our troops in barracks, thus separating them from the great body of the citizens, if we trained up our officers in military schools and establishments, and if we had military clubs for them exclusively to associate together, the army of England would no longer be a part of the people of England, any more than the army of Russia was a part of the people of Russia. The noble earl then contended, that even if parliament were to concede to ministers the large military establishments they required, it would be impossible to raise from the country, in its present exhausted condition, the means of paying such a force. He entreated the House, therefore, to do its duty, called upon as it was by the British public, and not to abstain from going into the inquiry, because it might, and certainly would be laborious. He trusted their lordships would not shrink from the task, but continue to inquire into the distresses and difficulties of the country until they could find some better remedy for them than a standing army and increased taxation.

The Earl of *Westmoreland* ridiculed the idea which seemed to be entertained, that our liberties and the constitution were seriously endangered by the maintenance of such a force as it was now proposed to keep up; and contended, that in point of fact it was a much less efficient army, in the proportion of what it had to do, than the army of 1791. With respect to the army in France, that had been sanctioned by treaty and approved by parliament, and the army of India had also been approved by parliament. The 25,000 men for Ireland, it was admitted by all, were necessary for the tranquillity of that country under its present circumstances. The propriety of the increased force intended to be maintained in Canada, no one would dispute who considered the extended population and the extended cultivation of that territory, or who reflected upon the military spirit shown by its neighbours. It should be remembered, also, that it was often impossible, for months together, to send out any reinforcements to that possession, however much they might be needed on any great emergency. As to the comparisons that had been made between the peace establishment now proposed, and that which had been kept up at any former period, the only question for parliament to consider was, what the necessities of the present time required; and upon that principle he was willing that the measure should be tried. For himself, he believed the necessity to be fairly made out by his majesty's ministers, and therefore the extent of military force required, ought to be granted. He did not mean to trouble the House with any observations upon the acknowledged distresses under which the country laboured, but he wished to remark, that the return of peace, after a long and expensive war, always produced a revulsion, which, for a time, necessarily occasioned much difficulty and embarrassment. If the noble lords opposite would only refer to any period of our history they would find that to have been invariably the case. He should certainly vote against going into the committee, because he did not conceive that it could produce any real benefit to the country.

The Earl of *Darnley* supported the motion. He understood it had been said by one of the ministers of the Crown that the people of England manifested an ignorant impatience for a relaxation of taxation. The reason of their impatience, to which such an ungracious epithet had been affixed, was perfectly clear and plain: after having made exertions which all allowed to be unexampled in the history of this country, and perhaps of the world, they now found themselves, in consequence of those exertions in a situation of great and universal distress. If the House of Commons were occupied day after day with receiving and canvassing petitions from all parts of the country, should it be said that the House of Lords alone refused to take the distresses of the country into consideration? The subject of our military establishments properly did not, perhaps, come before the House at present, but he could not help taking the earliest opportunity of protesting against the military spirit, which was now but too prevalent, and which was so alarming to every lover of our constitution. While no interest seemed to be taken in our naval affairs, the taste for a military spirit was growing on us every day. It was utterly impossible in the nature of things, that the finances of the country could bear such an enormous establishment. With respect to the mode of levying the tax on property, if it were really a tax on property, and not on income—if it were necessary—if it were for a season of war, something might be conceded; at present he must put it to the House, whether it was necessary to press on the country so odious and inquisitorial an impost.

The Duke of *Bedford* shortly replied. He lamented that he had not been able to do more justice to the grave and important subject to which he had directed the attention of their lordships, and thanked his noble friends for the very able support which they had given him. The arguments of the noble lords opposite had only confirmed the necessity of making the inquiry; but he confessed he had not anticipated the charge which a noble earl had introduced with his speech. That noble lord had seemed to think, that he wished to have a large military force in Ireland, in order to quell the discontented spirit of the Roman Catholics of that country; but he never meant to cast such a reflection on so respectable and loyal a body of his majesty's subjects. At the same time, however, he could not forbear to express his opinion, that the repeated rejection of their petitions to the legislature had engendered many disorders, and tended very much to aggravate the disquiet and dissatisfaction which so unhappily prevailed in that part of the kingdom. The noble earl had passed great encomiums on the present local government, and he was ready to allow, that they were fully entitled to his praise. He cheerfully acknowledged, that a man of more liberal principles, of greater integrity and justice, or of a more kind and benevolent mind, than the lord lieutenant did not exist. The chief secretary had also done much to conciliate the affections of the people, and had rendered the most important services, by the liberal and enlightened system of education which he was exerting himself to establish, making no distinctions whatever between Catholics and Protestants, but extending its influence equally to the poor of both denominations. But allowing that all this, and even more, had been accomplished by the local government, was it not an additional argument for going into an inquiry? For if the people of Ireland, having derived all these advantages, were still dissatisfied and unquiet, it was obvious that there must be something radically wrong in the state of society there, or something radically wrong in the local government. For his own part, he never meant, as had been charged to him, to calumniate the Irish character; he had lived among them, and loved them for their generous hearts and tempers. He would not trouble the House with any additional observations, but content himself with repeating, that the question had been most ably discussed by his noble friends, and that the arguments on the other side were altogether in favour of the inquiry.

Lord *Lynedoch*, in consequence of an allusion by a noble earl below him, to what was named the military club, which he supposed to be connected with the military spirit of the capital, wished to say a few words respecting that institution. In another place a misrepresentation had been made, without any intention, he had no doubt, on that subject. It had been said that this institution was so favoured by an illustrious person, who from his exalted station he durst hardly name in that House, and by another illustrious person, at the head of the army, distinguished for his impartiality in that high office—and when he named this individual, this was sufficient to convince their lordships that the charge could not be true—that there was such a systematic design of supporting this club by undue influence entertained in a certain quarter, that every interest was used to induce officers to become members of it; and not only that, but that returns of the persons who acceded, and those who refused, were made out and transmitted to the quarter in question. From his situation as one of the committee of this club, he knew there was no authority for the statement; but he had considered it his duty, besides to make every inquiry into the subject, and could assure the House there was not the slightest foundation for the imputation against the illustrious personages to whom he had alluded. No such returns had ever been made out. He rose to correct this error which had been adopted also by the most respectable newspapers, coming as it did, recommended to the House with all the eloquence of that respectable person by whom the subject had been first brought before the public. He said he would give his support to the motion of the noble duke. With regard to the war he gave his majesty's ministers every credit for the able manner in which they had conducted it to such a prosperous conclusion; and in voting for the present motion, he did not do so from any want of confidence in them, but from a conviction, that from the difficulties in which the country was involved, such an inquiry was an imperious duty.

Their lordships then divided upon the duke of Bedford's motion:

Contents	71
Not Contents	140
Majority against the Motion	69

List of the Minority.

Present.

Dukes.
Sussex
Gloucester
Somerset
Bedford.
Marquisses.
Buckingham
Lansdowne
Wellesley.
Earls.
Essex
Cowper
Jersey
Stanhope
Fitzwilliam
Caernarvon
Fortescue
Besborough
Darnley
Lauderdale
Rosslyn
Grey
Kingston.
Viscount.
Torrington.
Lords.
Saye and Sele
King
Montfort
Foley
Holland
Bulkeley
Grenville
Auckland
Somers
Lynedoch.

Proxies.

Dukes.
Kent
Leinster
Argyll
Grafton
Devonshire.
Marquisses.
Blandford
Downshire
Douglas.
Earls.
St. Vincent
Spencer
Albemarle
Thanet
Ilchester
Grosvenor
Suffolk
Cork
Guildford
Charlemont
Donoughmore
Derby
Breadalbane
Darlington
Ossory
Waldegrave.
Viscounts.
Clifden
Anson
Hereford.
Lords.
Carrington
Ashburton
Braybrook
Glastonbury
Sondes
Cawdor
St. John
Lillford
Crewe
Dundas
Yarborough
Hutchinson
Ducie.

Present, 31; Proxies, 40;—Contents, 71.

The bishop of Norwich paired off for the Contents with the bishop of Chichester.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, March 12.

Petitions against the Property Tax.] Petitions against the property tax were presented from Castle Douglas, the county of Surrey, Chertsey, Falkirk, Brighthelmstone, Colchester, Henley on Thames, Berwick, Nottingham, Hay, Manchester, Duffield and Forfar.

Mr. *Holme Sumner* presented the petition against the renewal of the property tax, which, he said, had been adopted at a meeting of the freeholders of the county of Surrey, called by the high sheriff, and numerously and most respectably attended. The petitioners stated, that they had as yet seen no symptoms of the economy held out as necessary for the country in the speech from the throne; and complained of the great standing army proposed to be kept up in time of peace. It would be doing injustice to the petitioners if it was not fairly and fully admitted, that a most respectful and impartial hearing was given to all parties at the meeting in question; and that after a free and fair discussion, the result was, that an infinitely great majority concurred in adopting the present petition. While he differed in opinion with the petitioners as to the propriety of the measures which they recommended, he could not however but feel pleasure in presenting a petition so respectably signed.

Mr. *S. Thornton* lamented that he had, from severe indisposition, been obliged to absent himself from his duty in the House, and to apply a week ago for leave of absence. He had, from the same cause, been unable to attend the county meeting of Surrey; but, having looked over the petition, he must bear his testimony to the weight and respectability of the signatures.

Mr. *Western* presented the petition against the property tax from the inhabitants of Colchester. He said the petitioners concluded the prayer of their petition, by entreating the House to reject any proposition for the renewal of that oppressive and detested measure, under any modification whatever. The inhabitants were convened by the mayor, to take the subject into consideration. The meeting was very numerous and respectable, and the petition was unanimously adopted.

Lord *Binning* presented the petition from the farmers of the county of Berwick, against the property tax, and praying, if the tax should nevertheless be renewed, that some modification should be introduced in favour of the tenant. He certainly differed from the petitioners in opinion, but he was not the less anxious to bear testimony to the high respectability of the petitioners.

Mr. *John Smith* presented a petition from the town of Nottingham, signed, he said, by upwards of 4000 persons. The petitioners complained of the oppressive and inquisitorial tax on income, particularly as they had been led to expect, that after the heavy burthens they had suffered during the war, they should now be able to reap the blessings of peace, without the imposition of the war taxes. The petitioners regarded with indignation the quibble which had been resorted to by the minister; and on that subject the hon. member conceived that his constituents had a right to complain, because a universal sentiment prevailed throughout the country, that the property tax was a measure only to be imposed in time of war. As to the omission of the words, "and no longer," for his part he was perfectly unacquainted with the fact that they had been left out of the last act. He was sorry he did not now see the chancellor of the exchequer in his place, as he felt it his duty to say that during the whole course of his parliamentary duties, he never felt more surprised or concerned than when he heard the statement of that right hon. gentleman. There was a part of the petition, which he held in his hand, to which he wished to call the attention of the House, as being a fact of a novel description, and mentioned in very few petitions which had yet been presented. The petitioners complained that at the very moment that the country was exposed to these inquisitorial measures and weighed down by the load of taxation —at that very instant, his majesty's ministers had thought fit to excuse the payment of a very large debt due to this country by one of the foreign powers. It did appear that the noble lord had not insisted upon the payment of this loan, and he conceived that it was too much to be endured, that the people should be oppressed and borne down with taxation, and that foreigners should be the object of the relief to be afforded. The very extravagant military establishment to be supported during the time of profound peace, was also complained of by the petitioners, and the hon. member could assure the House, that his constituents had paid the minutest attention to this subject as well as that of the finances: they expressly complained of the excess in the civil list: they did not place any reliance in the idle professions of the ministers, but they did rely on the attention of parliament for the maintenance of their rights and their liberties.

Lord *Rancliffe* could not help taking this opportunity of remarking upon what had fallen from the noble lord over the way (lord Castlereagh) last night in the course of his speech, as it appeared to him a most extraordinary thing that the continuance of this tax should bring prosperity to the country. How this could be maintained he had not the smallest conception; but he would recommend to that noble lord to go round the country, and be an eye-witness to the misery that there existed, and not be contented with merely surveying the outside of the habitations of the poor wretches, but enter the houses and judge for himself, if he would not believe the statements contained in the petitions. With respect to the pledge given to the House by the chancellor of the exchequer, he would recall to the memory of hon. members what had been asserted by the chancellor of the exchequer in his speech in 1809, completely contradicting all the statements which had been now made. In that speech the right hon. gentleman declared that no one proposed to continue this tax in time of peace, not even as an annual grant. This was a curious fact when contrasted with the speeches which had been lately made on the subject of this odious measure.

General *Matthew* said, he had hitherto avoided expressing his sentiments on the subject of the property tax, wishing first to see whether any of his hon. countrymen would take any part in support of that tax; but he was glad to find that, with the exception of two ministers, none of his countrymen had taken any part in favour of so odious and detestable a measure. He had seen in the public prints what he considered as a libel on his countrymen. It had been stated that ministers could not possibly get a majority without the assistance of the Irish members, his countrymen, who, for the sake of the exemption with respect to Ireland, were to enable them to cram the tax down the throats of the English. His countrymen, he was sure, would never lend themselves to assist in cramming down the throats of any people a tax which they were not ready to share with them. He was sorry to say, however, that this had already had a great effect on the public mind in England against his countrymen. He was sorry he had not been present in the House when the petition from the county of Surrey was presented, as he had seen in an account of the proceedings at Epsom, that, when a worthy and most respected friend of his (Mr. Denison) did say something in favour of the Irish, and of that country which from having given birth to that distinguished general the duke of Wellington, whenever its name was mentioned, was usually followed by acclamations, the meeting received that compliment with groans and hisses. This was a question altogether English, and did not affect the Irish. He thought they were called on in liberality not to take any share whatever in the question. He had heard it said, that the Irish members were deeply interested in shifting the burthens from their own shoulders to the shoulders of the English; and many hon. gentlemen thought the Irish members had no right to vote on the subject. As, however, they had the misfortune of being brought over here contrary to their own will, their own interest, and the interest of their nation, they could not in fairness be precluded from voting on all questions before the House. The Union was the source of all the misfortunes and distresses which had befallen his country, and unless it was repealed this great empire would be shaken to its foundation. So long as the Irish representatives staid here, they certainly had a right to vote, but he thought in common with many of his countrymen within these walls, that on the present occasion, interested as they were, they ought to wave their right; and as they were obliged to remain here, at least for the present, it would be better to conciliate than to irritate the people of England. This odious tax could not be carried without the assistance of the Irish members. The Irish nation hated tyranny and oppression too much to assist in subjecting others to it. And what could this tax be called but tyrannical and oppressive? If his countrymen did not vote against the tax, he thought they ought not to vote at all.

Mr. *Finlay* wished to set the House right with respect to a statement made last night when the petitions from Glasgow were presented. It had been said, that that part of the country, and the city of Glasgow more particularly, paid less than their share of the property tax; and that the property tax paid by them did not amount to so much as their house tax. He thought it right to state, that in Scotland, at least in the city of Glasgow, the people paid as much in proportion to their means as in London, or in any other part of England. It was only necessary for him, in support of this averment, to mention that the proportion of the tax paid by persons engaged in trade and manufactures, &c. in Glasgow, amounted to double the sum raised from the same class in Manchester, though the trade of Manchester was double that of Glasgow. The statement in question had therefore been made with a total absence of all knowledge on the subject.

Mr. *Fremantle* stated, that at the Surrey meeting the compliment paid to Ireland, instead of being received with groans and hisses, was warmly applauded.

General *Matthew* expressed his satisfaction at finding the occurrence in question had not taken place.

Colonel *Wood* presented a petition from the town of Hay against the continuance of the war taxes during peace and large military establishments. Brecknockshire in general was, he said, more interested in the repeal of the malt tax than the property tax, and he could have wished that the subject of the malt tax had been discussed previous to the property tax, for if the latter should be rejected they would have no chance of getting rid of the malt tax. The farmers of Brecknockshire suffered greater inconvenience from the tax on agricultural horses than from the property tax. Indeed the amount of property tax paid by them was less than their horse taxes. Though the prayer of the petition was against all war taxes, he thought it right to state that he believed the property tax was more particularly meant. The hon. member expressed himself as being entirely in favour both of the property tax and the army estimates: the one, because he conceived there were many other taxes, which, if taken off, would afford much more relief to the poor; and the other, because he considered the military establishment not as a permanent measure, but as an intermediate establishment between war and peace.

Sir *Charles Morgan* said, that the distress of the county of Brecknock was so great, that it was impossible the farmers could pay the property tax, without selling off their stock. He had supported the military establishments through confidence in the ministers who had brought the war to a glorious termination, and on them was the responsibility of those establishments. He had also voted against the reduction of the household troops, not on the ground that they were necessary for parade or show, but because they had nobly distinguished themselves in war by invincible courage. They had also shown such moderation when called on to support the civil power, that we had nothing to fear for our constitution.

Lord *Stanley* said, he had to present a petition, very numerously signed, from the inhabitants of the towns of Manchester and Salford, against the income or property tax and the existence of a large standing army in time of peace. The petitioners also pressed on the House the necessity of rigid economy in the whole administration of the state, and especially the abolition of useless and sinecure places. He completely concurred with the petitioners in their reprobation of the continuance of the property tax, because it was fully understood in the course of the debates last year, that it should not be continued in time of peace, and because it was impossible that it could be carried into execution, without being injurious to commerce and to private honour, by a minute investigation of the concerns of individuals. He also concurred in the opinion of the petitioners as to the large standing army now kept up; the existence of which was hostile to the true interests of the constitution, by the vast increase of the influence of the Crown over the many persons connected with the military establishments. The most comprehensive system of economy should be boldly extended, not only to this, but to all other branches of public expenditure, and more especially to that part of public expense, which was looked to with universal distaste by the country, the sums applied to the gratification of royal caprice. He hoped they should hear no more of that squanderous and lavish profusion which, in a certain quarter, resembled more the pomp and magnificence of a Persian satrap, seated in all the splendour of oriental state, than the sober dignity of a British prince, seated in the bosom of his subjects. He also hoped they would hear no more of expenditures on thatched cottages, that were hardly fit for princes in the best days of this country, but which were in these times a mockery upon public reduction. A great source of saving would be found in the reduction of those offices, now executed by two or more individuals. For instance, there were two postmasters-general, of whom one had long been employed abroad as an ambassador. Yet there had been no difficulty or deficiency in the duties of that department, which proved that the place of one of these paymasters was useless. As to the petition which he held in his hand, he did not present it as the petition of the whole towns of Manchester and Salford, because the borough-reeves of those towns had refused to call a general meeting. A requisition had been sent to these magistrates, requiring them to call a meeting on the subject, signed by some of the most respectable persons in the town, but a counter-requisition had been sent to the borough-reeves, and though this counter-requisition was not so numerously signed as the requisition, they had refused to call a meeting. The petition had been agreed on subsequently at a meeting convened without the sanction of the magistrates, and could only be taken as the petition of the individuals who signed it. The number of signatures would have been greater, if a sheet had not been cancelled, on which two or three names had incautiously been admitted, which it was not thought proper should be allowed to remain. On the sheet so cancelled, were some hundreds of unexceptionable signatures.

Mr. *Philips* said, he could give the House a more detailed account of the manner in which the petition had been adopted, from information which he could not doubt. A requisition had been sent to the borough-reeves, signed by 120 inhabitants. Now, it had been usual in the town of Manchester, when the adoption of any measure unpleasant to the existing administration was apprehended, to quash the proceedings at the outset, by a counter-requisition more numerously signed than the requisition. In the present instance other means had been resorted to. In the first meeting of the requisitionists with the magistrates, a fatal objection was urged against the requisition of the same description. The requisition desired a meeting of the inhabitants " of the towns of Manchester, Salford, and their vicinity;" which was the usual form in which meetings were called together at Manchester. The magistrate, however, said that the word vicinity rendered the requisition of no avail. Another requisition was immediately drawn up and signed by 120 persons. No answer was given to this paper, till after three days the counter-requisitionists, who had been incessantly busy in obtaining signatures, presented their counter requisition with 111 names. It was not in the power of the magistrates to refuse the meeting, on the ground that the counter-requisition was more numerously signed. What, then, was the pretence to which they resorted? They said that they would not call a meeting " because the subject had already been much discussed in the House of Commons, and they had no doubt it would be maturely considered without the interference of petitions, which could be attended with no beneficial result whatever." There could be no severer libel than this on the House of Commons, for it included a supposition that they paid no attention to the petitions of the people. On this pretence, in opposition to the majority of the inhabitants, had these magistrates refused to call a meeting, and done all in their power to prevent the subject from exercising his constitutional right of petitioning. A number of the inhabitants had, however, called a meeting, and the petition in the hand of his noble friend was unanimously resolved upon. At that meeting two of the magistrates had attended, one of whom said, he had been adverse to the refusal of a town meeting, but he had conceived himself bound by the majority. The secret of the want of unanimity in the town was, that if there was a town which most dreaded the effects of the threats of the chancellor of the exchequer, it was Manchester. The taxes with which the country had been threatened last year if the income tax had not been continued, would have pressed on many individuals in that town more heavily than an income tax of 10 per cent. The petition was, nevertheless, now signed by 1600 persons, though 500 names had been cancelled on account of the introduction, by want of caution or excess of zeal, of the names of some boys. The petition was adopted on Thursday, and sent off on Friday; it being thought necessary to send it off thus early. It would otherwise have been signed by as many thousands as there were hundreds at present. The commercial distress at Manchester was in direct contradiction to the description of the prosperity of the country given in the speech from the throne. Where was this prosperity to be found? not among the commercial classes—not among the manufacturing classes—certainly not among the agriculturists. This prosperity, in short, was to be found among none but men in office; and if the picture had been drawn by ministers from a view of their own small class, it was correct; for while all prices had fallen, their salaries had remained the same. There was no trust to be put in the promises of economy, which had been put forth by ministers. The household troops, which were twice the expense of other troops, were kept up to an unexampled amount, and the whole expenditure was on such a scale of extravagance, that they seemed deluded by their own false statements as to the prosperity of the kingdom. So thoughtlessly had the ministers distributed the treasure of the country, that the states of Wirtemberg had made a representation to their king, the object of which was, that the subsidy paid by us to Wirtemberg should be applied to the relief of the distresses of that country. The subsidies to Brunswick and Hanover had been much greater than that to Wirtemberg, and formed premiums for the encouragement of that military spirit which our ministers affected so much to lament. After the enormous grant of last year, for the liquidation of the debt on the civil list, what regard to economy was proved by the excess of 277,000*l.* which was now laid before the House? Every impartial man would see that the property tax was required, not by the necessities of the country, but for the purpose of supporting lavish expenditure. He could not abstain from imputing to ministers a disposition to extravagance; and the tax, if granted by the House, would tend to encourage that disposition. By this impost, property was often taxed when it afforded no income; and the class of persons who were least able to pay, namely, small tradesmen, were induced to pay more than they were obliged by law to contribute, for the purpose of saving their credit. He hoped the landholders would not be deluded by the indulgence which it was said would be extended to them; for if the tax was once fixed on the rest of the community, their necks might soon again be bent under the yoke.

Lord *Castlereagh* said, he did not blame the wide range taken by the hon. gentleman who had spoken last, but he hoped it would not be considered that all the arguments in that and similar speeches were unanswerable, because they were not immediately answered. He wished to speak merely at present of the misconception of the hon. member, as to the subsidy to Wirtemberg. That subsidy was at the rate of 11*l.* 2*s.* a man on the force brought into the field by that power. That sum, far from being more than what was necessary to bring a man into the field, was only a fourth or fifth part of that expense. It was true that the states of Wirtemberg might require this sum to be applied to the relief of their burthens, if they had before provided for the whole expense of that force. In this country a military force could not be brought into the field under 80*l.* or 100*l.* a man. On the continent the cheapest rate was 40*l.* or 50*l.* a man. There was no distinction between the sum paid to Hanover and Brunswick and the other powers, on their contingent, but we had thought it economical to take entirely into our pay an additional number of the troops of those nations to complete our own contingent. He hoped therefore, that as it was found the hon. gentleman had been so mistaken in one point, that it would not be thought that the rest of his arguments were inexpugnable. The hon. member had chosen to set up his own judgment against the judgment of the House, on the question of the military force, but it was too much to assume facts which were quite incorrect.

Mr. *Philips* explained. It was apparent from the proceedings of the states of Wirtemberg, that they had been able to bring their troops into the field without our aid. The subsidy, therefore, had not been required by necessity, but had been given because it was thought more essential to alleviate the burthens of the people of Germany than those of the people of England.

Lord *Castlereagh* explained, that the larger powers of the continent, in addition to the force paid for in part by us, had sent twice that number into the field.

Mr. *Brougham* said, that the advantage of the debates which took place on the petitions was evident, notwithstanding the objections so often made to them. What was the substance of the noble lord's objection to them on the present occasion? Among many statements perfectly unanswerable, his hon. friend had advanced a proposition which was founded on an erroneous calculation; but the noble lord had been able immediately to refute this error, and he would have been also at liberty to refute the other statements of his hon. friend, if they had not been so firmly grounded that it was not in the power of the noble lord to shake them.

Sir *Walter Stirling* thought that the property tax, with proper modifications, might be tolerated for two years.

Sir *Robert Peel* said, that any tax affecting, as this did, the manufactures of the country, was a most unfortunate measure. The mischief felt by it was indescribable; and he would suggest, that whatever measure was deemed necessary to extricate us from the state of things created by a long war, it should be one calculated to take as little as possible from the pocket of the manufacturer, after the burthens which he had borne in support of the war. The greatest hatred had formerly existed towards this tax in the town of Manchester; and if the inhabitants were less hostile to it now, it must have been from weighty reasons which they had received, or from the fear of some taxes more oppressive to them individually. The property tax was most oppressive to the poor as well as to the rich, for it prevented them from obtaining employment, and no worse mode could be adopted of raising money.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he agreed with his noble friend (lord Castlereagh), that all the assertions advanced in these debates on the other side of the House, were not to be taken for proved, because they were for the moment uncontradicted. He wished to say a few words with regard to the excess of the civil list, as to which an hon. gentleman had been mistaken. By casting his eye on the abstract of the civil list accounts, the hon. member would have seen that the only branch of the civil list in which there had been any excess, either over the estimates of the last year, or the average of the two first years of the regency, was the diplomatic establishment, in which, as well in consequence of our negociations all over Europe, as from the additional allowances to ambassadors recommended by the last civil list committee, there had been an increase. The other branches, viz. the expense of the royal family, and the allowances to the judges, did not exceed the average of 1812 and 1813, or the estimates of last year. The excess in the diplomatic branch of the civil list had, of course, nothing to do with the regal splendor or expenses. The right hon. gentleman, reverting to the observations of sir Robert Peel, on the effects of the property tax upon the manufacturers, contended that they were affected by it less than any other classes of the community. He referred to the general statements, to show what proportion of these persons paid to the tax, and asserted, that there was no class on which it fell so severely as on the higher orders of society. The House had been told, that the continuance of the tax would be a conspiracy of the rich against the poor. He would say, on the contrary, that the rejection of this tax would be very much of this description, as it would throw upon the poor a burthen which they would otherwise avoid. If the tax should take place, the imposition upon the poorer classes would be as nothing, or next to nothing; but no other tax could be substituted which would not materially affect them. The very circumstance of this tax falling on persons of great incomes only, showed that the poorer classes were entirely exempt from it. Whether it were wanted for the purposes of winding up the expenses of the war, or for any other occasion, he would persist that there was no tax so advantageous. He was willing to state in the preamble of the bill that this was the object of it, and to limit its duration to two years. He was not ashamed to say, notwithstanding the repeated assertions of gentlemen on the opposite side, that no parliamentary pledge had been given last year for the annihilation of the tax. It was a pledge no member of this House, no minister of the Crown, not any body of ministers could give. The interests of parliament were inseparable from those of the country, and was it consistent with those interests for any minister to pledge himself that he would not do this or that, provided he afterwards saw it necessary? He trusted that this declaration would satisfy the House; and he would again enter his protest against the supposition, that because he and his friends declined answering any particular question put to them, their silence was to be considered as an acquiescence in the truth of what was asserted.

Mr. *Brougham* wished to know whether the excess of 277,000*l.* arose from the deficiency of last year, or from the debts of former years?

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* replied, that the sum of 530,000*l.* voted last year, had been expended in paying the arrears of former years.

Lord *Stanley* said, it was certainly impossible to pledge parliament, which must act on its own views of the immediate case; but he would say, that the bearing of every speech he had heard last year was, that the property tax was to be for one year, and no longer; and so it was understood by the whole country.

Lord *Castlereagh* was of opinion, that the argument relative to what was called a pledge, had better be reserved for another opportunity. He believed it was perfectly understood that the vote of the last year for the civil list was to discharge the arrears of the last seven years, during a great portion of which time the annual provision was acknowledged to be inadequate.

Lord *Folkestone* observed, that he could not in justice to his own feelings and to the dignity of the House, omit noticing what had been lately stated by the chancellor of the exchequer, namely, that no refusal of his to answer was to be considered as an acknowledgment of the truth of what was asserted by the opposite side of the House. The noble lord said, he was of opinion, that the gentlemen opposite never refused to answer but when they could not do it. Their silence was the effect of inability, not of inclination. No man could witness the extravagance of the civil list without reprobating, in the severest terms, the conduct of all connected with it. Really the conduct of the right hon. gentleman was somewhat ludicrous, and one part of his speech was an excellent comment on the other. In one part of his speech he denies the possibility of any minister having the power of giving a pledge to the country respecting any thing, and yet, with a singular inconsistency, he proceeded to tell the House, in the latter end of that very speech, that he proposed giving a pledge in his new act —[Hear, hear!]. He denied the assertion of the chancellor of the exchequer, that this tax did not affect the manufacturer. Every man knew that it did. He also deprecated the attempt so often made to separate the interests of rich and poor. It was an attempt detestable and base in the extreme, pregnant with the most mischievous consequences to the country. Were we to be told that the poor were not affected by the tax. Go then to the habitations of such people—see the wretchedness they are at present labouring under from want of employment—see the catalogue of crimes swelled to an unparalleled size, and ask whether in the seizure of the rich man's property, the poor man was not stript of his all. The crime, for example, of poaching, had increased to an extravagant degree, and this, with every other crime which the poor industrious starving mechanic was often driven to perpetrate, was the baneful consequence, not certainly of the property tax alone, but of the general pressure of taxation, of which the property tax was the head and chief.

Lord *Binning* said, he would not then

follow the noble lord in his inquiry into the increase of crimes, and particularly that of poaching, for such an examination would prove too extensive. He would, however, remark on another part of the noble lord's observations, in which he represented ministers as avoiding some questions, and answering readily to others. In such a distinction, he conceived that his right hon. friends were very justifiable, for not replying to the speeches occasioned by the petitions against the property tax, which were only repetitions of the same expressions and the same sentiments, night after night. They took particular care to refute any unfounded assertions that might originate on the opposite side. For instance, on the present night, one hon. gentleman had censured them for extravagance in their engagements with the Wirtemberg and Hanoverian troops, and that misrepresentation had been immediately refuted. The hon. member had, in that statement, unfairly assumed the very question which the House would have, on a future occasion, to decide on. With respect to the pledge alleged to have been given for the discontinuance of the property tax, he never remembered such a circumstance. He however felt that the words promised to be introduced by the chancellor of the exchequer into the preamble of the bill, intimating that the tax was imposed for two years, or to raise 12 millions, to wind up the arrears of the war expenditure, would be received by the House and the country as a proof of the sincerity of his majesty's ministers not to continue it longer than they promised.

Mr. *Finlay* could not suppress his astonishment at the unfounded statement made by the chancellor of the exchequer at the commencement of this business, namely, that the tax was not oppressive to manufacturers. Indeed, if the tax was levied according to law it would not, but the manner in which that law was enforced, was ruinous to manufacturer and mechanic. No argument could be adduced to prove the contrary. With respect to manufacturers, it was well known that the law made no exception in their favour, in consequence of any loss they might sustain in machinery. Now, it was well known that many manufacturers were compelled to pay when they were actually considerable losers. Besides the tax was not on property but on income, and of consequence was the source of many evils. It became the prelude to every deliberate fraud and deceit. He abhorred the idea of thus separating the otherwise indissoluble interests of poor and rich, and contended, there was not a tradesmen in London who earned 25 or 30 shillings a week, who was not hurt by it. Two modes of supplying the deficiency had been suggested, one by borrowing, which was certainly a preferable way to the tax, as the people could more readily pay three or four hundred thousand a year than six millions. The other mode was, by allowing the commissioners of the act of the 26th of the King, respecting the redemption of the national debt, to appropriate part of that sum. He denied the necessity of any addition being made to the other taxes, should the one on property be abolished. The poor were labouring under extreme distress, from which they certainly were entitled to a little respite.

Mr. *Methuen* alluded to what had fallen from lord Folkestone relative to the increased extent of poaching. He acceded altogether to the sentiments of the noble lord, and thought that taxation induced pauperism, pauperism poaching, and that poaching was one of the greatest practical evils; for persons went armed through the country, in defiance of the laws. Could a greater evil exist than not to be able to sleep in one's bed in peace, for fear of the outrages which gangs of poachers, of more than 20 in number, might be induced to commit?

Mr. *Forbes* said, the conduct of ministers was somewhat like that of two persons on a road, one of whom carried a heavy burthen, which he wished to lay down and obtain a little rest. No, says his neighbour, you must go on though you should sink, as when you come on two miles further, your journey will be over. The voice of the country was at present directed against the tax, and no wonder, when its horrid nature was considered. The people had made numberless sacrifices; they had patiently borne many ills; and was it not consonant to common sense, that their feelings should be roused when they saw no end to their hardships? He trusted that the country would still persevere. He hoped, from the sentiments already expressed in the House, and the numerous petitions presented, that there would be no more to do on Monday next, when the question would come before the House, than to vote and throw it out.

Mr. *Grenfell* repeated what he had said on former occasions, that as the right hon. gentleman only wanted to raise twelve millions, he could get them in various ways, without continuing the property tax. It was a fact that could not be denied, that the public had at that moment in the hands of their bankers, the bank of England, a sum nearly equal to what was required, or almost twelve millions. There was no just reason to be given why this sum ought not to be resorted to. What should we say of a man in private life, who, having 12,000*l.* lying at his banker's, and wanting to raise that amount, should pretend that he did not know how to drag it out of his hands? The comparison might appear ludicrous, but the cases were in point of fact the same. He would ask the right hon. gentleman whether he was sure, in the event of his carrying the measure, that he would find that respectable and honourable class of individuals, the country magistrates, ready to come forward and lend themselves, as they had hitherto done, to carry it into execution?

Mr. *Jones* said a few words against the property tax.

Mr. *Swan* praised ministers for the zeal they had showed in finding means for raising taxes; but he could not see on what principle they could apply to the bank for assistance to save the property tax. They had already taken nine millions from the bank, and what with one arrangement or another, the proprietors of bank stock had for several years been kept without any bonus whatever.

Mr. *Grenfell* expressed his surprise that the hon. gentleman, who was a bank stock proprietor, should not have been better informed on the subject. The public had not had nine, but only three millions from the bank. It was true that we were to have three millions more, and the bank had the modesty to want us to pay four per cent. for it.

Mr. *Peter Moore* said, that when three millions were borrowed from the bank, they were but a part of the money belonging to the nation. He considered the financial system of the country as base and despicable in the extreme. In every department of that system, there was the grossest, and most culpable defect. He had repeatedly stated this to the House, and had no hesitation in again saying it was the case. There was no doubt, one treasury which was governed by the lord high treasurer, and five other lords, but really when any parliamentary grant was made, there was actually a scramble among the friends of government for the money, and wherever any sum was granted there was a treasury there. Thus one department became independent of another, each saying, "This quota was mine, and you shan't have one farthing of it." He contended, that the first lord of the treasury should have all the charge, as in fact he had all the responsibility. Government ought to be like a net, the leaders of which should be in the hands of the treasury. The system in which the loans from the bank were carried on, was a system of fraud and nothing else. Let any man examine the conduct of the chancellor of the exchequer, and he would find this to be the case, "I condition with you," says he, in one of his letters to the bank, which he (Mr. Moore) now held in his hand, "for the loan of three millions, and you shall keep 12 of mine for two, three, or five years." Was this, in the name of wonder, any thing else than a political bribe to the bank? Let the circumstances he had mentioned be examined; let this system of iniquity be probed to the bottom, and the truth would, however reluctantly, come out. When he looked around the House he saw many persons who might be considered as treasurers of public money; let them be narrowly examined. It was the duty of every honest hearted man to try every establishment, and to search for every thing which might develope the truth. He was ashamed for ministers when he considered that notwithstanding this sum of 12 millions lying dormant, they chose to oppress the already exhausted inhabitants of the country. The difficulties, no doubt, which the country had to encounter in defraying this expense of the war might be great, but he wished these difficulties to be met on proper grounds, in a constitutional manner, not at the caprice of any minister or body of ministers. He was deeply impressed with the importance of the subject, and he trusted this would be an apology for having so long engaged the attention of the House.

Lord *Stanley* expressed his hope, that the effect of these, and other petitions that were forthcoming, would be, to induce the right hon. gentleman to withdraw the tax.

The several petitions were ordered to lie on the table.

BILL FOR EFFECTUALLY DETAINING NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE.] Lord *Castlereagh* rose, pursuant to notice, to move for leave to bring in two bills—the one for the more effectually detaining in custody Napoleon Buonaparté, and the other for regulating the intercourse with the island of St. Helena, while Buonaparté should be detained in that island. Doubts had been entertained, whether it was competent to the Crown to detain Buonaparté a prisoner after the termination of the war; of which doubts, however, he himself did not partake; but yet the bill he proposed was deemed necessary, with a view to remove those doubts. As to the justice and policy of detaining Buonaparté in custody, he apprehended that no doubt could exist; and as to the legality of the proceeding, with reference to the law of nations, he was fully satisfied of the propriety and necessity of the measure. As a sovereign prince, we were warranted in detaining him, in consequence of his breach of treaty, and incapacity to afford any guarantee for the observance of any treaty; but we had this additional ground to justify our conduct, that he was a prisoner of war, who, as a native of Corsica, was a subject of France, which power had declined to claim his restoration. Therefore, independently of his general character, this country was justified in detaining this individual in custody according to the law of nations. But the circumstance of Buonaparté having withdrawn from Elba, where he had pledged himself by a solemn treaty to remain, and his utter inability to afford any assurance for the observance of any engagements, warranted his detention. Thus, whether regarded as a sovereign prince, or a prisoner of war, his detention was justifiable in a technical view, according to the law of nations, and that detention was imperiously called for by a due consideration for public safety and general peace. With regard to the treatment of Buonaparté, it was proposed to extend to him every indulgence that was consistent with his safe custody, and that he should experience the most liberal treatment as a prisoner of war. But it was material that the officers appointed to superintend his custody should be aware in what light to consider Buonaparté; what opinion they were to entertain of the character of their prisoner. Now, with respect to the intercourse of foreign nations with St. Helena, the object of the second bill which he proposed was to regulate the execution of the measure which had been already notified by government, to neutral powers. When these two bills were brought in, gentlemen would have an opportunity of considering their details, and suggesting any amendments they might think proper, but he apprehended that their introduction would not be opposed.

On the motion for leave to bring in the first bill,

Mr. *Brougham* said, he did not rise for the purpose of giving any opposition to this bill; for whatever opinion he entertained upon the subject, he should wish to see the bill before he delivered it. But he had no hesitation in saying that he conceived no harm could result from the measure; he had no objection to it whatever, as far as he could judge at present; on the contrary, he thought that the opinions about it must be almost unanimous, as far as related to the securing the custody of Buonaparté's person; and if any doubts arose, it would be best to settle it by a legislative act. For whether we considered Buonaparté as a prisoner of war, not claimed by his own government, or in any other light, we had, under the circumstances which had occurred, an unquestionable right to detain him, even by the law of nations, without any act of parliament. He could conceive no difficulty whatever in this object, coupled, however, with all possible lenity, and with the probability of such a period being put to his custody, however remote, as any state of affairs, which could not now be contemplated, might render necessary.

Mr. *Forbes* asked, whether it was intended by the noble lord to propose any compensation to those settlers or others, who had property on the island of St. Helena, for the loss they were likely to sustain through the exclusion of the trade of neutrals from that island?

Lord *Castlereagh* expressed his belief that the persons alluded to would rather gain than lose by the operation of the proposed measures.

Lord *Nugent* inquired whether Buonaparté was to be regarded by the officers appointed to superintend his custody, as an independent sovereign or as a prisoner of war?

Lord *Castlereagh* replied, that he was to be regarded by those officers as a prisoner of war, to be treated with the utmost liberality.

Mr. *Grenfell* having supposed Mr.

Brougham to express an idea that the time of Buonaparté's detention was to be limited, and having asked for explanation,

Mr. *Brougham* expressly denied that he had uttered any such opinion. The period of his custody he had particularly thought was a question wholly premature. No term, he conceived, could be put to it, except under circumstances which it was impossible to anticipate. But still this bill might be made to provide for such an emergency.

General *Matthew* wished to know whether general Bertrand, and the other persons who had accompanied Buonaparté to St. Helena, were also to be considered as prisoners, or whether they were to be allowed to go where they liked?

The *Attorney General* said it was obvious that the bill would be left open to any gentleman to make his observations upon, and to propose any alterations in it at the proper time. At present, the hon. general must be aware that the measure was not likely to extend to any body else than Buonaparté.

Mr. *Bennet* repeated the question, whether the persons in the suite of Buonaparté were to be allowed to go where they pleased?

Lord *Castlereagh* replied, that the custody of Buonaparté was the object of the bill, and it certainly was not in contemplation to detain any body else.

Here the conversation dropped, and leave was given to bring in the bills.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Wednesday, March 13.

Mr. Butt's Petition.] On the resumed question respecting Mr. Butt's petition,

The *Lord Chancellor* observed, that the petition was informal, being written on several sheets of paper, without a necessary connexion; but as he should be sorry to remove its rejection merely on that ground, he wished to state, that in its present shape the petitioner prayed for no legislative relief, but for proceedings in a court of law, which that House could not originate. He therefore thought the petition could not be received; but it was competent for the petitioner, on being better advised as to the form of a petition to that House, to present another. He should therefor move, that the petition be rejected.

The Marquis of *Lansdowne* agreed in the distinction taken by the lord chancellor between a petition praying for legislative relief, and one praying for proceedings in a court of law, and as this petition prayed for the latter, which that House could not in the first instance originate, he concurred in the motion.

The petition was accordingly rejected.

Marriage of the Princess Charlotte of Wales.] The Earl of *Liverpool* gave notice, that he expected to receive the commands of his royal highness the Prince Regent to bring down to the House to-morrow a message from his royal highness relative to the marriage of her royal highness the Princess Charlotte of Wales. The usual practice on these occasions was to move an address upon the message on the same day on which it was presented, and he thought it right, therefore, to give this notice now, that any noble lord, who might be desirous to attend, might know that it was in contemplation to bring down such a message to the House to-morrow.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, March 13.

Petitions against the Property Tax.] Petitions against the Property Tax were presented from Barton-upon-Humber, Arbroath, Aberdeen, Broadway, Suffolk, Dumfries, and Blackwall.

Mr. *Gooch*, on presenting the petition from the county of Suffolk, observed, that it was impossible to describe the general distress of the landed interest at the present time. He gave the chancellor of the exchequer all possible credit for his good intentions towards this interest, and for his plans to relieve them; but he really thought that he was not, up to this moment aware of the unparalleled and shocking state of the agriculture of the country; and he feared that all that was yet proposed to be done for this branch would be of little avail. He must now come to the most painful part of his duty to his constituents, which was to declare that, in what they had stated on the subject of the property tax, he could not quite agree with them. He believed that, under the present situation of the country, no better means could be found than the continuance of this tax, under proper modifications. He was sorry for the inquisitorial power which it possessed, but with all its sins upon its head, he could conceive no better measure could be discovered for a limited time, to enable ministers to wind up the expenses of the war. But if he thought that they meant to make it a permanent measure, he would certainly oppose it, as he would have done by the peace establishment, under a similar opinion. He thought, however, that we ought not to sacrifice one atom of our national honour and independence, which these measures went to maintain. One reason why he should vote for the property tax was, that he conceived the taking off of the tenant's tax would not answer the purpose, unless all the other taxes that pressed upon them were done away. The taking off of the war malt tax would be a much greater relief to the farmer; but as ministers could not possibly remove the property and the war malt tax too, he thought the latter, being more oppressive than the former, ought in preference to be abolished. After the manner in which the people of this country had borne the burthens and privations of the war, it was but just that they should be entitled to some advantages from the peace; and amongst these was the obtaining of good, wholesome beverage, and the not being driven to drink smuggled spirits, to the injury of their health and morals. He could state that in that part of the country to which he belonged, the farmers were no longer able to allow their men beer, so that they were either obliged to resort to spirits, to drink water, or to make their own malt clandestinely.

Sir *J. C. Hippisley* thought the hon. member and the House ought to look generally at what tended to depress the agricultural interest, and not attribute the distress to any one particular tax more than another. Much of the causes would be found in the pressure of the poor-rates, the church rates, the tithes, &c. He should be sorry to see it recognised as a truism in that House, that the landed interest was the only resource that ministers had to look to in time of war; an idea of this nature having been thrown out by the hon. member in the course of his speech.

Mr. *Gooch* explained. He did not mean to say that the landed interest was the only resource of ministers: he could never have entertained such an idea; but merely that at all times it was one of their principal resources, and God knew, he wished they had not so far availed themselves of it as they had done.

Mr. *Baring* said, that no gentleman had ever been more unjustly accused of not sufficiently favouring land, than the hon. gentleman who spoke last. He indeed wished to give relief to land-owners at the expense of the other classes. His speech, however, showed that the inducement held out by the chancellor of the exchequer, had made more impression on the hon. gentleman than his constituents. They, it seemed, were disposed to make common cause with the other classes respecting a burthen common to all, which was inquisitorial to a degree, and interfered with the rights and happiness of the subject. The inquisitorial nature of the tax was not felt, indeed, in its greatest extent by the landed interest. Not but they were troubled now and then with inquiries respecting the value of lands not let, and in the proprietor's own hands; but still they had no idea of the trouble to which other descriptions of people were put, in ascertaining the amount of their income. He could not but congratulate the House, that if they had not the support of the hon. gentleman, they had at least the support of his constituents, who were not contented with a partial relief, but, as all honest men ought to do, wished that relief to be extended to all classes. He only wished to observe farther, that the tenant's duty was not to be all taken off by the chancellor of the exchequer. A number of candid gentlemen thought that when they were taking care of the landed interest, all the other classes might be trodden down at pleasure. But he wished to observe, that the tax was merely remitted for two years, and therefore if they now sanctioned this tax, they exposed the whole country to a return of a tax from which all classes were now anxious to be relieved.

Mr. *Gooch* said, the present petition was signed by above 1500 most respectable people; but he had already presented seven petitions from Suffolk, agreed to at meetings convened in divisions of the county, and containing between 5 and 6000 signatures. Only one of these petitions was against the property tax. The others complained generally of the oppression of all taxes [Hear, hear!] He did not mean to say, they did not include under this the property tax, or that they did not even point particularly to the property tax.

Mr. *Round* was convinced that ministers brought forward the property tax from a just feeling of its necessity, and no other motive; and he had no doubt that when the time arrived, the House would do their duty in supporting them.

Mr. *Atherley* stated, that a petition against the property tax and a large standing army, signed by a number of respectable inhabitants of the town of Southampton, had been left at an inn for signatures. On Friday last, the room of the inn in which it was kept was forced open, and the petition carried away [a laugh].

Mr. *Rose* said, though the hon. member who preceded him had not concluded his speech with any motion, in the absence of his relation he would state what he knew of the petition in question. Three weeks ago, a certain number of persons in Southampton thought of calling a meeting on the subject of the property tax, but they could not hammer out a requisition containing a sufficient number of respectable names. They framed a petition, however, which was signed by 20 or 30 respectable persons, but it was also signed by an immense number of paupers, chimney-sweeps, and persons of that description. He believed when the gentlemen of respectability saw such a number of paupers mixed with them, they grew ashamed, and some of them must have stolen that petition from the public house. Nothing was so easy as for the same persons to frame another petition—they had plenty of time—the mayor said if they brought to him a proper requisition he would at once call another meeting. If the petition were advertised, and a reward offered, he would cheerfully give twenty guineas himself.

Lord *Folkestone* denied that the petition lay at a common public-house: it was left for signature at the most respectable inn in the place, where it was signed by 400 or 500 persons, but, on Friday morning last, the room that contained it was broken open, and it was carried off. The right hon. gentleman's friends had given it great opposition, but he did not attribute to them any thing farther.

Mr. *Methuen* gave notice that he should, on Monday next, submit a motion to the House on the subject of the salaries paid to useless offices—especially on the subject of the continuance of the office of third secretary of state in time of peace [Hear, hear!].

Mr. *Tierney* said, that if the hon. member intended to bring forward a motion on the subject of economy, he would advise him to move for the order in council for the continuance of the war salary of the secretaries of the admiralty in time of peace.

Mr. Methuen then moved an address for the order in council of June, 1815, which rendered permanent the war salaries of the secretaries of the admiralty.—The motion was agreed to.

Mr. *Brougham* said, he had a petition to present from the seven incorporations of Dumfries against the property tax. This was the second petition which had been given him to present from the district of burghs in question. It was hardly necessary for him to say that in Scotland a member was not returned by one borough, but by a number of boroughs, each of which chose an elector. The district in question contained five boroughs, of which one before and one at present had sent up petitions against the property tax, and not choosing to deliver them to their representative who, like the representatives of some other places, would have spoken against the prayer of his constituents, they had given it to him to present to that House. The petitioners stated that they had expected relief from the burthens which they had borne in time of war, and had earnestly looked forward to the measures to be taken in consequence of the pledge of economy which had been given in the Speech from the throne, but that to their bitter disappointment the conduct of his majesty's ministers had been in direct opposition to the promise which they had given. What would these petitioners have thought if the extraordinary rumour, to which he could not but advert, had reached their ears before they had concluded the prayer of their petition about economy? This rumour was so extraordinary, that he could not at first lend it the least faith. Notwithstanding the conduct of ministers since the commencement of the session—notwithstanding their utter disregard of their own professions, and of the recommendation which had been heard from the throne—notwithstanding the pledges they had broken, and their eagerness to adopt every measure that was directly contrary to retrenchment and economy, he was utterly at a loss to conceive how his majesty's ministers could, in the face of the proceedings going on in that House, and in the country, urging the most scrupulous regard to every practicable economy, advising reduction in every department where it could be safely resorted to—one noble member pointing out the propriety of abolishing places in the admiralty and treasury, proposing that the business executed by six lords in each department should be done by four, and that the expenses which were paid during war for some extraordinary war services might now be saved, when no war services were required—another noble lord recommending the abolition of the third secretary of state's office, which had the same pretence for its creation, and was now equally useless—he was utterly at a loss, while these things were going on in the House, and this temper was manifesting itself, that the ministers of the Crown could so insult the nation, as not only to take measures for rendering useless places permanent, but for increasing their salaries. But such was the case—that at this very time, while these discussions were going on, while these advices were pressed with all the weight which public distress and public opinion could give them, his majesty's government were actually employed in raising the salaries of the two secretaries of the admiralty. This was the extraordinary rumour to which he alluded—this was the alarming report which had gone abroad. Not only the secretaries of the admiralty, but the clerks likewise, were to receive an increase of income. At a time when their services were supposed to be diminished,—at a time when all the articles of living were sinking in price,—when every thing could be purchased at 40 or 50 per cent. cheaper than during the war, and when the very distresses of the agricultural part of the community were attributed to the low price of provisions—at such a time these officers were to have their salaries increased. Upon what pretence could ministers justify such a measure, at such a period, and in such circumstances? He would state the circumstances as he had heard them, although the fact was so extraordinary as almost to exceed belief. It was said, that lord Spencer, in 1806, having recommended two different rates of salary for the secretaries of the navy—one for war, and the other for peace (the former of course being higher than the latter)—that recommendation was about to be carried into execution on a late occasion, when peace was established. An hon. secretary having called for his salary, was offered it at the reduced rate. He testified disappointment, refused to accept it, and said he would, after a short time, call again. He had soon made the proper application in the proper quarter; for, before he returned to make his demand, an order in council had been issued to give him his full salary on the war establishment. It was to ascertain the truth of this strange and almost incredible fact that the papers were moved for, containing the order in council. If his statement was not correct, the papers would show, and he would then confess that he had been misinformed. If the truth was as he had stated it, he hoped some hon. member of character and weight in the House, who could make his voice be heard in defence of the rights of the people, would interfere and put a stop to that barefaced and profligate disregard of economy, to that prodigal waste of the public resources, in a period of unexampled distress, for which the government seemed eager to distinguish itself. There was no measure of censure too great, there was no treatment too severe, for a set of men who acted in so unjustifiable and profligate a manner.

Sir *George Warrender* observed, that the hon. and learned gentleman had, with his usual warmth and ardour, brought forward, without any proof whatever, a great number of statements respecting the increase of salaries of secretaries and others; but if he had had patience, this question, about which he had said so much, would have come before the House in the discussion of the naval establishment, and then would have been the time to inquire into it. But the hon. gentleman appeared anxious to endeavour to prevent the House from forming a deliberate judgment on such questions; for certainly after what had been heard, no sober opinion could be formed on them. Respecting the increase just complained of in such violent terms, he could say, in the absence of the right hon. secretary to the admiralty, who had been particularly alluded to, that what had been done was in pursuance of the recommendation of the board of revision. [Mr. Brougham asked whether it was lord St. Vincent's board of revision?] He meant the board of revision of 1805 [Hear, hear! from Mr. Brougham]. He begged the House would suspend their judgments on the subject, and remember that the offices in question had been the only ones in which the salaries were not the same in war and peace.

Mr. *Tierney* said, his hon. and learned friend had very properly asked, whether lord St. Vincent's board of revision had recommended that measure, because that board had really meant to bring about a reform in the civil affairs of the navy. The board of 1805 was instituted for the purpose of knocking in the head all reform. Their reports had never been sanctioned by the House, and their suggestions were not at all worth attending to.

Lord *Nugent* contended, that if his hon. and learned friend had attacked the ministers without evidence, the hon. baronet had defended them without either evidence or argument.

Mr. *Baring* said, that from all that had appeared since the commencement of the session, the House and the country would by this time be aware, that there was a regular system on the part of the ministers, to increase the salaries of all the public departments. It was not in one particular department that this disposition was manifested. They had first heard of the increase in the customs and excise, and now the same fact had come out as to the admiralty. Some departments were still to come; but what the House had as yet heard was, that, instead of retrenchment, in every department, respecting which they had received any information, there had been augmentations. Indeed, every instance of the interference of ministers, as to salaries, had been in direct contradiction to their promises.

Lord *Castlereagh* was perfectly prepared to admit, that when an increase of salary took place in any department, the *onus* of proving its necessity lay with the ministers who recommended it. The increase which was the subject of the present discussion, was made upon the recommendation of the board of revision, as the hon. baronet had stated. He did not wish, by referring to such a circumstance, to place the justice of the conduct of government upon it, or to bring it forward as a plea in bar to any arguments which gentlemen on the other side might be disposed to employ. He was prepared to contend, that if the place in question required an augmentation of salary, as a proper remuneration for the services performed, there was nothing in the circumstances of the country that could render it improper or impolitic. We were not in such a state of distress as should prevent us from granting what was deemed a proper reward for public services. It would be allowed by the gentlemen on the other side, that when their friends were in office, economy was as necessary as at the present moment—that the country was as unable to support useless or extravagant burthens. They had even declared our situation to be exceedingly depressed, and our resources to be dilapidated; and yet, when they went out of place, they had no less than 150 offices in creation connected with the revenue. There was not only an increase of salary meditated, but new officers to a vast extent, to be appointed. Many of these officers were to enjoy snug, comfortable salaries, and all of them together would have fixed an extraordinary and uncalled-for burthen upon the country, from which it was saved by the sudden appointment of other ministers to guide his majesty's councils. The hon. and learned gentleman, who was always so precipitate in his charges, should have considered the conduct of other administrations, and the circumstances of the present case, before he proceeded to use the language he had thought proper to employ. But it was his habit to accuse and to censure without reflection or examination. Every petition he presented, almost every time he rose, he took an opportunity of coming out with some assumption or assertion, some statement or rumour, on which he enjoyed a triumph of an hour or two, when the effect of his speech was destroyed by some argument or explanation which he had not foreseen. In speaking on the army estimates, he boldly advanced the charge, that the guards were kept merely on account of the patronage which that species of force put into the hands of ministers. The reply given to this assertion was completely overpowering to the hon. and learned gentleman; it put him down, and neither he nor his friends had a word to say in his defence. Government did not now ground the justification of their measures upon the answer they could make to the accusations of the hon. and learned gentleman, or the example of his friends when in office. His majesty's present ministers would not follow one step in the path of their predecessors, nor defend themselves on the ground that they had in contemplation measures more expensive; but as they had created new offices, they might expect, from those who intended to do so, a patient and candid examination of those reasons which rendered the less burthensome measure of an increase of salary advisable. The government would show cause for their conduct, and the noble lord claimed nothing from the gentlemen opposite (who, with all their regard to economy, had been obliged to increase the property tax, from 6¼ to 10 per cent.) but a fair hearing to the plea which he might advance. He never expected any favour from them; he never deprecated their opposition—all that he wished was to meet by fair argument—all that he dreaded was, that clamour which would listen to none. He deprecated the inflammation which they attempted to create in the public mind, by unfounded charges of profligacy and bad faith. When the distresses of the country came regularly to be considered in the House, as on a late occasion (Mr. Western's motion), when their opinions might have been regularly delivered without any party violence, and when they might have suggested plans of relief, their benches were almost deserted, there was nothing of sufficient interest to secure their attendance; but when any topic of inflammation was to be brought forward, or any opportunity occurred of making popular charges against government, they were all in their places cheering and supporting each other.

Mr. *Methuen* wished to remind the noble lord, that the question was not one between the ministers and the opposition, but between the government and the country; and he assured the noble lord, for whom he felt much respect, that he had extremely regretted that the rumour respecting the increase of salaries had not been contradicted. He should however suspend his judgment until the circumstances were more fully before the House.

Lord *Castlereagh* replied, that he did not require the suggestion of the hon. gentleman to inform him of this circumstance. It was upon this principle that he had taken up the subject, to prevent the country from being misled by premature assertions.

Mr. *Ponsonby*.—I am sure the hon. member for Wiltshire, and every other gentleman who hears me, will take the noble lord's hint. He is not a person who wants their assistance—he can discover the state of every question without it. I hope the hon. member, and all the other country gentlemen, will avail themselves of this warning, and not be too obtrusive of their advice. The noble lord tells us, that a former administration had it in their contemplation to create 150 new offices. It may be so—although I never heard of it. But I beg the chancellor of the exchequer, who was secretary of the treasury at that time, to explain to the House, how many of those offices were created—for what purpose they were created—and on what account, in consequence of what arrangement, they were suppressed? I hope we shall have a full explanation on this subject; and I trust it will be a more satisfactory one, than the last given by the right hon. gentleman, when his former friends were attacked for their conduct relative to the property tax. The noble lord says he is ready to argue the principle of economy with all the gentlemen on this side of the House. Yes, he is perfectly ready to argue the principle, night after night—he is only indisposed to adopt the practice of it. The noble lord asserts, that when the most important affairs of the country are under discussion, then gentlemen absent themselves from this side of the House; and that, when a committee is to be appointed for examining into the state of the agricultural interest, the benches are deserted. I know that I attended the House, when the motion of the hon. member for Essex (Mr. Western) was discussed, until it was declared that a committee should be granted. What good purpose could be obtained, by waiting, after that declaration was made, until the committee absolutely met, I cannot perceive. Perhaps the noble lord thinks that the eloquence of gentlemen on the other side of the House ought to be a sufficient inducement to keep gentlemen in attendance. I must here really own my bad taste, and state, that I do not feel inclined to remain in the House for the mere purpose of listening to the oratory of the gentlemen opposite, and when that which is called for happens to be granted, I am disposed to retire from this display of eloquence. I think the noble lord will find, that when the committee come to sit, there will be nothing like a want of attendance; and he must know, that until they do sit, no business can be done. The noble lord says, we neglect the important business of the country, and come to the House, for the purpose of exciting clamour and irritation. I am willing to bear my part of this accusation, and I wish the country, the bankers, the merchants, and traders of the city of London, to understand the compliment the noble lord pays them. He treats their opinions on the state of the country as idle clamour. Really, Sir, the noble lord's situation appears to me to have overcome both his temper and his good sense. I did not think a minister of the Crown in this country, would treat the sentiments of the people as he has done. I did not imagine, that, when the great commercial and agricultural interests stated to the House the necessity of economy, their representations would have been spoken of as arising from a spirit of clamour.

Lord *Castlereagh* denied that he had imputed clamour to the country, although he might have done so to the gentlemen opposite; and he thought a better illustration of what he had said, could not be found, than in the speech which they had just heard. The right hon. gentleman said, that he had charged the country with acting clamorously. He had done no such thing. The opinions of individuals, in every part of the empire, though frequently not in unison with his own, were respectfully received. But it was a most extraordinary mistatement, and a most pregnant instance of the want of argument under which the right hon. gentleman laboured, to state that he had attributed clamour to the merchants or bankers, or to any other class of his majesty's subjects. He could assure the right hon. gentleman that he applied the observation to the particular circumstances attending recent discussions within the walls of that House. He said, that he would meet the right hon. gentleman in fair argument, but he deprecated that spirit of clamour, which was busied with anticipations unfavourable to the measures of his majesty's government. With respect to the absence of gentlemen from the House, on particular occasions, although he had concluded the right hon. gentleman in the larger sense, he was free to admit that he saw him in his place at one period of the evening on which the subject of the agricultural interest was discussed.

Sir *John Newport*, when the noble lord disclaimed having made any accusation against the people, wished to refer him to the recollection of the manner in which he had designated their anxieties, as "an ignorant impatience for the relaxation of taxation."

Mr. *Vesey Fitzgerald* would assert, that whatever observations the noble lord had made to this effect, he never did apply them to any of the petitions generally or collectively. The noble lord had attributed to the gentlemen opposite a propensity, before the distresses of the country could be relieved, to encourage the people to look with an ignorant impatience to the relaxation of taxation.—[Cries of No, no, from the opposite side.]—He would contend that this was the sense in which the words were used, and certainly not in that attributed by the noble lord's opponents. And as to the hon. gentleman's saying that ministers had no object but the raising of salaries, there were far more proofs of this practice having been adopted by their opponents, as well as of their total dereliction of economy. He would ask the hon. gentlemen opposite, would it have been fair in him, if the noble lord (Castlereagh) had been appointed first lord of the admiralty, and immediately on coming into office had added 2000*l.* a-year to his salary, to arraign him for this augmentation, after what had happened in the time of their own administration?

Mr. *Croker* said, he had to apologize to the House for not being in his place when this discussion began. But an hon. gentleman opposite having expressed himself anxious to know when certain papers could be laid on the table of the House, he had gone to inquire about them, and had but just returned. A subject, he found, had been introduced in his absence, with which he was intimately connected. Without knowing what had been said on this subject, he would state what the circumstances of the transaction were. In the year 1786, a commission was appointed for revising the expenditure of the public departments. Its recommendation was sanctioned by an order in council; and it it was then thought equitable to extend to different offices of government, concerned in military exertions, a rule, by which the salaries of the officers, in time of war, were to be greater than in time of peace. Whether or not that principle was a just one, he could not say; but it was never proceeded on, except in the single case of the admiralty office. By the order in council of 1786, it was settled that the salaries of the secretary of the admiralty and his clerks should vary one-fourth between the time of war and of peace. Every one knew that a war broke out soon after, and from that time to the present the country, with very little intermission, was engaged in hostilities. In the year 1806, another commission was appointed, for revising, as it was called, the civil department of the navy; and that commission in its report stated, that it did not recommend the system of a war and peace salary being acted upon with respect to the officers of the admiralty, because, in time of peace, they would not be more able to apply themselves to other avocations, for the support of their families, than they would be in time of war. Thus it continued till the late French war; and it was then thought necessary, that the naval department should be placed on the same footing as the other branches of the public service, for the principle of the order of 1789 had not been extended to the navy office, to the victualling office, &c. At the time Buonaparté was in Paris, last year, his Majesty, by his order in council, looking to the injustice of the recommendation of the commission which confined this principle to one branch of the public service, thought proper to do it away. By this means he, the second secretary, and their clerks, received the same salary as during the war. He could only say, that he did not solicit this favour. He conceived the regulation to be very fair, with respect to subordinate officers. He thought it was dreadful, after they had spent many years in the department, to see them obliged to quit it, in consequence of the reduction of their salaries, in time of peace. If this alteration had not taken place, the secretary of the admiralty would have been the only civil officer in the country to whom the regulation would have applied. It was intended to be applied to all the departments of the public service, but it never was acted on. Whether the principle were right or wrong, he would not say. He never did express an opinion on the subject, either in that or any other place, and he was now prevented from expressing his sentiments, on account of being employed in that particular office. But, unless some strong reason could be shown, for keeping the secretary of the admiralty in a different situation from every other officer of state, he thought it was not improper, in his majesty's government, to make the alteration they had done.

Mr. *Tierney* said, the order in council, alluded to by the right hon. gentleman, was not promulgated in the year 1786, but long subsequent to that period. He understood that the salary of the officers of the admiralty, at that time, was very small, but that it was made up by fees, which, in time of war, were, of course, much greater than in time of peace. An arrangement was then made, by which the fees were taken away—and, in lieu of them, a greater salary was given. The principle, therefore, seemed evidently to require, that the salary should not be the same in a period of peace, as in a time of war. This was the feeling of earl Spencer, who, considering the amount of the fees taken away, settled the salary of the secretary at 4,000*l.* in time of peace, and 3,000*l.* in time of war. If he were correct in this statement, and he knew he was, then the House must see, that what the new committee of revision (on the conduct of which, at a proper period, he would speak at large) suggested, was really absurd. Unless it were shown that the salary was not a commutation for fees, it ought to bear some proportion to the fluctuations of that source of emolument for the removal of which it had been granted.

Mr. *Croker* said, he was not quite prepared to speak exactly as to dates, but he had guarded himself from the imputation of mistatement, by observing, that it was at the commencement of the first French war, that the order in council, founded on the recommendation of the former committee of revision, was sent forth. The right hon. gentleman was quite correct in saying, that the alteration took place when the fees were abolished. But he would recollect, that the secretary of the admiralty then received, by fees, from 10,000*l.* to 18,000*l.* per annum, an enormous sum, which was very properly reduced; and he would also bear in mind, that earl Spencer, or whoever proposed the regulation, meant that it should be extended to every branch of government, which principle had never been followed up.

Mr. *Tierney* observed, that, in former times, the secretary of the admiralty, in consideration of giving up fees, received 4,000*l.* per annum, in a period of war, and 3,000*l.* in a period of peace. Why, he would ask, should more be now given?

Mr. *Croker*, after other further observations, contended that 3000*l.* a year was not sufficient remuneration for the secretary of the admiralty in time of peace.

Mr. *Tierney* remarked upon the singularity that although the hon. gentleman professed, in the first instance, that he was quite unprepared for this discussion, yet in a few moments afterwards, his preparation appeared to be complete; but still he would maintain that at a period when the duties of this office were so materially reduced, it was not equitable to increase the salary of the officer.

Mr. *Forbes* was of opinion, that the present was a most unfortunate moment to propose an increase of any salary whatever; and he thought that nothing but absolute necessity could justify the extension of the salaries of public officers. If such necessity could be shown, of course it would be sufficient to justify the proceeding now under discussion. But, to see how far that proceeding was necessary, he should advise his hon. friend, the member for Wiltshire, to move for a document that would be very useful in the discussion of which he had given notice, namely a return of all public officers of government, who had offered to throw up their situations in consequence of the inadequacy of their salaries.

Lord *Milton* thought, that in addition to the order already made, a copy should be laid before the House of the order alluded to, for settling the salary of the secretary of the admiralty at a former period.

Mr. *Croker* expressed his acquiescence in this proposition.

Admiral *Markham* said, that at the piece of Amiens the salaries of the secretary and under secretary of the admiralty was not more than what was settled by the arrangement alluded to, and that no increase whatever of those salaries took place, while he presumed that the duties of those officers were not now more onerous than they were on that occasion.

Lord *Ebrington*, in allusion to what had fallen from Mr. Fitzgerald, observed, that the reflection he had cast on the conduct of a noble earl (Grey) when at the head of the admiralty, was not justified by the circumstances. When lord Melville filled the situation, he found the salary inadequate, and, to make up the deficiency, had procured a sinecure of 2000*l.* per ann. The conduct of earl Grey was very different; under the sanction of parliament, (which saw the necessity of preventing the recurrence of so disgraceful a proceeding as that to which he had first alluded), 2000*l.* per annum was added to the regular salary of the office.

Mr. *Vesey Fitzgerald* denied that he had cast any reflection on the noble earl. He thought it fair to ask from others, that justice which he would willingly render to them. If the first act of the noble earl was to add 2000*l.* to his salary, he had a right to contend, as it passed without any accusation of extravagance against the government of that day, that the mere fact of an increase of salary in the present instance, unaccompanied by any evidence of waste, should not have given rise to the animadversions that had been made on it.

Mr. *Lockhart* took that opportunity of reiterating his opinion, that the proposed establishment and the proposed relief to the agricultural classes, could only be accomplished by strictly attending to the real amount of the revenue, as affected by the state of the currency and by prices in general. He should be sorry indeed to say any thing that might be supposed to indicate a want of due regard to the interests of our army, but it was undeniable, that both military officers and all other public servants were at present great gainers by the distresses under which the country was labouring, and which distresses rendered it absolutely necessary that the country should have its service performed at the cheapest rate.

Admiral *Markham* asked whether it was intended to reduce the salary of the deputy comptroller of the navy, or whether the duties of that office would in future be performed by a commissioner, at a salary of 1000*l.* a-year?

Mr. *Croker* replied, that there was no intention whatever to reduce the usual salary of the office alluded to, but it was under consideration—whether that office might not be dispensed with during peace.

Admiral *Markham* said, that he could not conceive how the statement of the hon. gentleman could correspond with that of the hon. baronet, who was a lord of the admiralty. For it appeared from the latter, that while the salary of other officers was to be increased, that which was usually held by a naval officer was likely to be reduced. Thus the interest of the navy was, as had been too much the custom of late, totally neglected, while every advantage was to be granted to the hon. secretary, and other civil officers connected with the admiralty.

Mr. *Croker* denied that there was any intention to reduce the salary of the office alluded to; but in consequence of that office being now vacant, it was intended to consider whether it would be expedient to fill it up under existing circumstances.

Sir *G. Warrender* stated, that if the vacancy were supplied, there was no intention to make any reduction in the usual salary of the office.

Mr. *Brougham* said, that he should not upon this occasion enter into the consideration of the charges which he had conceived it his duty to prefer against the noble lord (Castlereagh). A day would come, and that at no distant period, when the noble lord would have to make his defence. Until that day should arrive, when the noble lord would be put on his trial, the noble lord would have to prepare his defence. In this instance, however, he (Mr. Brougham) was upon his own defence, for he was charged with bringing forward accusations night after night against ministers, which according to the noble lord's assertion, turned out to be mere assumptions, and had no foundation in fact—which, truly, the production of authentic papers served to falsify. But where was the evidence to sustain the noble lord's assertion? He had on this occasion charged ministers with the wasteful and profligate expenditure of the public money, in making an unnecessary addition to the salary of the secretary of the admiralty, and this addition was admitted by the noble lord himself, and also by the secretary alluded to. So far, then, the charge was confirmed; and as to other cases, he wished to know whether, in any instance in which he had moved for papers with respect to similar advances to other public officers, there had been made a return of *nil*. True it was, that to his motion, with regard to certain offices in the excise and customs in Scotland, the return was, that no increase had taken place in the offices to which that motion referred. But what afterwards turned out to be the fact? Why, that although the return was dated upon the 20th of February, it appeared from the admission of the chancellor of the exchequer, that the increase to which he alluded actually took place upon the 9th. It was often observed, that "ill news was swallow-winged;" but in this case it appeared that those good people in Scotland received good news very slowly indeed, as they were not aware on the 20th that ministers had, at the public expense, been so bountiful towards them on the 9th. So much, then, as to the alleged groundlessness of his charges against ministers. But he would challenge the noble lord to adduce the instance in which he had preferred a groundless charge, and if no such instance were adduced he would leave the House and the country, which from one end to the other complained, as the petitions on the table showed, of the prodigality of ministers, to decide between the noble lord and him. The noble lord had said a good deal about clamour; but the noble lord himself had on this and on other occasions had recourse to clamour, with a view, no doubt, to divert public attention from the real merit of the measures under discussion. For the noble lord, instead of endeavouring to justify his own conduct, made frequent attacks upon those gentlemen on his (Mr. Brougham's) side of the House, who were formerly in office, and who were, truly, accused by the noble lord of having also intended to make an increase of public offices. But this accusation, even if well founded, could avail nothing to the country, which universally complained of the enormous public expenditure, and the severe taxation incurred by it. The noble lord alleged, that the administration alluded to, proposed to create 150 new offices, and that he and his colleagues, upon their accession to office prevented the execution of this project. But what did the chancellor of the exchequer say to this allegation? for to him he would refer the noble lord for an explanation of the conduct of his colleagues. The right hon. gentleman who was then in office as secretary to the treasury, could surely speak to this subject; and, from the nature of his office, was best competent to account for such a measure. With every thing that took place during that administration, the right hon. gentleman was no doubt perfectly acquainted; and how could he sit silent while his colleagues were attacked? How could he sit silent without saying one word in vindication of measures in which he bore a part? The right hon. gentleman must have been confidentially apprised of the proceedings of his colleagues; and, why not even whisper to his noble friend something to mitigate his censures? If the administration alluded to were engaged in any jobs, the right hon. gentleman could scarcely be unaware of them. Indeed, from the nature of the office which he occupied, he was the fool of that administration. It behoved him to explain, for the defence of his own character; and if guiltless to answer the charges of the noble lord. The right hon. gentleman might answer the noble lord in private, and so settle the matter without troubling that House upon the subject. But with respect to the charge against the administration referred to, of intending to create 150 new offices, he would take leave to say a few words. From his knowledge of the character of the individuals concerned, he firmly believed that if even such an intention were entertained, these offices would be found not to have proceeded from any indifference to economy, or from any desire to augment patronage, but that, on the contrary, they were designed to watch the expenditure of the public money—to superintend the audit of public accounts, for instance, which was a measure notoriously necessary—that, on the whole, these offices would turn out to be rather productive of great advantage than of any detriment to the country. Such was his opinion; but whether that opinion was well-founded or not, it was for the chancellor of the exchequer to show. To him belonged the duty of justifying himself and his colleagues; for that House and the country had no concern in the accusation; still less did such an accusation avail to himself, and many other gentlemen about him, who had no connexion whatever with the administration alluded to. But let the chancellor of the exchequer, who was connected not only with that administration, but with every administration that had existed since the right hon. gentleman's introduction to public life, explain to his noble friend the conduct of his colleagues.—Now, with respect to the conduct of lord Grey, against whom a charge was preferred (and a charge he would advisedly call it), that he did from the public purse make an addition of 2,000*l.* a year to his salary, as first lord of the admiralty. Upon this point it had been already stated, that the noble lord so acted in pursuance of the general understanding of the House upon a certain discussion. If the statement of the noble lord's advance was not originally meant as a charge, the right hon. gentleman would have an opportunity of explaining it. The right hon. gentleman, no doubt, disclaimed the intention of making any charge against the noble lord; but then that disclaimer very much resembled the policy of Mrs. Candour in the play: for if the right hon. gentleman's statement were not meant as a charge, it availed nothing to his argument on the present occasion, the advance of lord Grey's salary having no analogy to the case under consideration. If the noble lord's advance were held a justifiable measure in that House, at the time it took place, from the general impression that the important office of first lord of the admiralty was before inadequately remunerated, how could that advance be cited to warrant the increase of the salary of the secretary of the admiralty at the very moment that the duties of that officer were so materially reduced? But, in fact, the former had no analogy to the latter, and still less had it any analogy to the case of the late lord Melville. For what was the conduct of that nobleman? Why, that instead of making any addition to the salary of the office of first lord of the admiralty, which was generally held to be inadequate, he augmented the revenue of a sinecure in Scotland, which he must enjoy during life; while lord Grey more manfully added to that salary which he could only enjoy during his tenure of the office to which it appertained. Were the two cases, then, in any respect similar? In the one case such an addition was made to the salary of a public officer, which was conceived to be necessary according to the sense of that House, on a fair consideration of public duty; while in the other a public officer evidently consulted his own personal interest. But to return to the charge of the noble lord, he hoped that noble lord would in future consider that that House and the country would not be biassed by the conduct of one party or the other, but judge impartially of the merit of public measures; and that stronger grounds must be advanced to influence that judgment, than could consist in the mere reiteration of personal or party attacks, about which, in fact, the public could feel no concern.

Mr. *Vesey Fitzgerald* denied that any charge against earl Grey had been made from that side of the House, and also denied that disregard of economy ought to be inferred, from the mere fact of salaries being augmented. The hon. and learned gentleman was the first person he had seen in that House who had persisted in an imputation founded on words used in debate, after these had been explained. Mr. Fitzgerald said, he had not insinuated any thing against the gentlemen opposite or their friends. He had brought forward charges against them as broad and as distinct as any which they had brought against the government.

Mr. *Brougham* thought, at the time, the statement made with respect to earl Grey had been brought forward to inculpate that nobleman. But he believed the explanation of the right hon. gentleman, and was satisfied his words had no meaning but that which he himself had described them to have.

Mr. *Robinson* said, that the hon. and learned gentleman had called another hon. member to order, and had displayed much virtuous indignation at language being used, which was very similar to that which the hon. and learned gentleman did not scruple to use himself. While speaking of his political opponents, he had described them to be in "the trammels of party." This assertion might be correct, or it might not; but why was such language to be held on one side of the House, if those who used it could not tolerate it on the other? The terms in which the hon. and learned gentleman frequently expressed himself were such, that it would seem he considered common honesty was not to be found in those who voted with ministers. The language in which he indulged meant, if it had any meaning, that the supporters of government were profligate, dishonest, and corrupt. The hon. and learned gentleman had said, he was now put upon his defence. It was surely to be expected that those whom he thus accused would be led by their feelings to retaliate where they had an opportunity of doing so. The hon. and learned gentleman had said that the charge he had made, which was that of a profligate waste of the public money, was admitted. This he denied. Because it was admitted that some augmentations of salaries had taken place, it did not follow that the epithet used by the hon. and learned gentleman was at all applicable to the case. The hon. and learned gentleman had a right to make his charges, but he had not a right to assume, because the increase of salaries was acknowledged, that the charge founded on this circumstance was admitted.

Mr. *Brougham* said, it could not be supposed, when he asserted the charge to be admitted, that he meant to say ministers acknowledged their profligacy. He was quite satisfied with what they had said; the fact of an augmentation of salaries being admitted he held the profligacy to follow of course.

Mr. *Robert Ward* spoke to order. The hon. and learned gentleman had already spoken twice on this subject, and could have no right to be heard again.

Mr. *Brougham* contended, he was not out of order. Having made a motion, after hearing what others had to say on it, he had replied.

The petition was brought up, and read. On the question that it should lie on the table,

Mr. *Brougham* resumed the argument in which he had been interrupted. The increase of salary being admitted, he would prove the imputed profligacy followed; unless it could be shown, that peace was not re-established, and that the necessaries of life were not greatly reduced in price. He denied having insinuated any thing against ministers. What had fallen from him he wished to be understood as direct charges on their misconduct.

Lord *Castlereagh* observed, that the hon. and learned gentleman, had again been driven from his ground. To assume, because an alleged fact was admitted, that the charge founded on that fact was also admitted, was to pursue a course which would not raise his character with the House or with the country. Whether that increase was right or wrong, it would be for the House to decide on some future occasion.

Lord *Folkestone* said, after the fact of the increase was admitted, the profligacy charged would appear to the whole country, as it did to him, to be completely established.

The Petition was then ordered to lie on the table. After which, Mr. Methuen moved for a copy of the Order in Council in January, 1816, for the increase of salaries in the Admiralty. Mr. Mellish having presented petitions against the property tax, from the inhabitants of Poplar and Blackwall,

Lord *Folkestone* rose to state a case of grievous hardship and injustice under this most obnoxious impost: and he was the more desirous of bringing it before the House, because it had been gravely stated that this tax did not affect the poor. He believed, that the more this tax was canvassed, the more was the truth likely to be attained. Whether the right hon. gentleman was afraid of that assertion, he did not know; but, as long as any good could be produced from it, he should not be deterred from stating his opinions. The right hon. gentleman had triumphantly asserted, that it was a tax against the rich, and not against the poor: but he was then in possession of a case which would prove that he was not correct. This case clearly showed that it affected a class of persons who were most of all to be pitied; they were not actually paupers, but in that situation which disqualified them from getting relief from the parish. The right hon. gentleman had said, that this tax did not press upon persons whose income was below 50*l.* per annum. The case, however, to which he had alluded, was the following:—A clergyman, who possessed a small living, from which he could make no savings, died, and left two daughters in the greatest distress. These young ladies had received that liberal education which their father was naturally anxious to give them, and, consequently, were unable to pursue the inferior occupations of life. The sadness of their condition excited the sympathy of the most respectable and opulent persons in the neighbourhood, who subscribed a sum of money to purchase for them an annuity of 40*l.* When the grantor paid the annuity, he deducted 4*l.* for the income tax, but the young ladies, understanding that they were not liable to be taxed, refused to allow it. They were told, however, that they must apply to the commissioners, and relief would be given. Accordingly they made an affidavit of the facts, and a representation was transmitted to the office of taxes in London, and the annuity deed sent up. For the space of four months they received no answer; but on the 27th of February this very concise reply was returned to the gentleman who had interested himself in their behalf—"Sir, I am directed by the commissioners to acquaint you, that the annuity, payable under the deed in question, is not an annuity within the meaning of the act, and therefore they cannot admit of your claim of allowance." Now, 4*l.* was no small part of an income of 40*l.* and the House would take into its most serious consideration, that in this case there was no decision of a jury; but Mr. Matthew Winter, the secretary of the commissioners, was perfectly despotic on the subject, and the young ladies were left in their distress. He could not conceive a case more grievous and afflicting than this; for, as he had already stated, the parties were precluded from seeking relief by the laws of the land. In respect to modifications, he denied that any good whatever could be produced by them. There were two material objections to this tax; the one that it was unjust in its principle; the other, that it was inquisitorial in its practice. Now, if modifications should be introduced to relieve the injustice, the inquisitorial powers must be increased; and if the inquisitorial powers were diminished, the injustice must be augmented. In a small canton of Switzerland, a sort of property tax had been imposed, but there was no inquiry into the nature of the income; the persons were only required to pay the tax. He did not think that the right hon. gentleman would be quite so romantic in his measures, but that he would extend and enforce the inquisitorial powers to the utmost degree. He hoped, however, that if what he had stated, was only a single case of hardship, though thousands of a similar nature might be produced, the House would think it sufficient to answer all those flourishing statements, which were only made to abate the ardour of the people; namely, that it was a tax upon the rich, and did not oppress the poor.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that no law could be so framed as not to occasion hardship to individuals. He should have thought that the case in question would have received relief, and was therefore inclined to believe that the noble lord must have misunderstood the facts. What he was ready to maintain was, that this tax would press less on the lower orders of society than any tax that could be devised. He was clearly of opinion, that it was a tax more upon the rich than on the poor. The two classes were bound together in a great degree; the one depended on the other; and where he found gentlemen living on their estates, encouraging industry, relieving distress, and, in short, supporting the true character of country gentlemen, no man would be more ready to pay respect to such honourable conduct. But there were other classes whom this tax would reach, and who could not otherwise be brought to contribute to the necessities of the state. He also considered it was falling with great propriety and justice on those who spent their property in foreign countries. When he had thought of modifications, he had been told that they were dishonest or unfair. He did not pretend that he could find relief for every case of hardship that might arise; but parliament was bound to give every attention to the subject: and he certainly flattered himself, that when the act was revised, it would be found the least oppressive and the least objectionable of any tax that had ever been imposed. To the attack that had been made upon him by an hon. and learned gentleman, he should not give any answer; but to the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Ponsonby) he felt himself more called upon to give an explanation. He thought the right hon. gentleman would not accuse him of having been the tool of that administration of which he was so distinguished a member; he had acted by the principles of those who were then in office, and the only reason that he gave no explanation before was, that he had no recollection of the circumstances.

Mr. *Ponsonby* was surprised that the right hon. gentleman should refer to him as a member of that administration, since he held no office in this country connected with the expenditure of the public money. He had filled the office of lord chancellor of Ireland, but the right hon. gentleman was secretary of the treasury. The want of recollection seemed a prevailing defect in the right hon. gentleman, and all his explanation of these transactions was, that he had a very imperfect memory.

Sir *M. W. Ridley* observed, that what the right hon. gentleman had said with respect to the necessity of laying a tax on those who chose to reside in other countries he thought a strong proof of the injustice and impolicy of the tax on income, and one of the strongest arguments against it; for it was principally on account of the very heavy burthen of taxation that they left their native land, and it was natural for people to seek those places where they could live at the cheapest rate.

Lord *Folkestone* said, that he did not think he had mistaken the facts of the case to which he had directed their attention, and if they were correct, they furnished an unanswerable argument to the right hon. gentleman's assertion, that the tax upon income did not press upon the poor.

The petition was ordered to lie on the table.

MOTION RESPECTING MILITARY GUARDS.] Lord *Folkestone* said:—Mr. Speaker; I rise, in pursuance of the notice which I gave the other night, to move for a return, the production of which will probably prove two things—first, that the increase, which I noticed the other night, in the use of soldiers for the purposes of police, has really taken place; and secondly, that though the increase of military duty in and about the metropolis has by this means been considerable within the last few years, it is not of such a description, as to call for or justify the great augmentation in the life and foot-guards, which the House were persuaded to vote the other night.

Sir, in submitting this motion to the House, I wish to take the opportunity of making one or two observations on what has lately occurred. On the last night, on which there were any discussions on this military question, the noble lord opposite, (lord Castlereagh) was pleased to express some indignation against my hon. and learned friend below me, (Mr. Brougham), at his complaint of the new appellation, which in the estimates before the House was given to the life and foot-guards. My hon. and learned friend had complained of the appellation given to them of household troops, and he said very truly, that this was an appellation which had been introduced within a few years, in imitation of the military governments of the continent. He complained that it was an aping of the French expression of *la maison du roi*. In answer to this, the noble lord said, that he was altogether mistaken; that it was not a new appellation, and that he would find it as applied to those troops in Mr. Burke's bill. At the time this assertion was made by the noble lord, it struck every one as very extraordinary, every body knowing that that bill referred altogether to the household properly so called, to the offices of the lord Steward of the lord Chamberlain, of the master of the horse, &c. and not at all to the military: but the assertion being broadly made, it was not possible for any one to contradict it on the spot without reference, and the observation passed unnoticed. On a subsequent examination of the bill, however, I found that the noble lord was quite mistaken; the word "household" occurs indeed in the bill over and over again; but as to any reference to troops, the word "troops" is not once mentioned in it. I was therefore at first somewhat at a loss to understand what it was to which the noble lord referred; but on consideration, I recollected that though the words "household troops" do not occur in the bill, in the speeches with which that bill was introduced and supported, they occur very often. The right hon. gentleman who moved that bill, describes in his speeches with just irony, the regulations of these troops—their discipline; he talks, too, of a mutiny amongst them. But what are these troops? They are not the guards; not the troops who would go forth to fight the enemies of the country; but the hosts of persons attached to the court, who come down to fight the battles of the minister in this House; not the guards who have muskets in their hands, but the gentlemen who hold white sticks: they are in short, the lords of the bed-chamber, the grooms of the bed-chamber, the chamberlains, and vice-chamberlains, who form so firm a phalanx in this and the other House of Parliament. Whether the noble lord meant to apply to the term life-guards and foot-guards, the sarcastic wit with which Mr. Burke described the household troops to which he referred, I leave it to him to explain. Sir, we heard the other night that the noble lord was much put to it for arguments; but if when the noble lord refers to history he goes on at this rate, at least he will never be at a loss for his facts.

Mr. Speaker, there is another observation which, with the indulgence of the House, I wish to submit to them. It did fall to my lot the other night to state to the House the apprehensions which I felt, that a military government was growing up in this country, and that there existed in certain quarters a wish and design to substitute a military despotism for the free constitution of this kingdom. In the course of the same debate, I was represented by an hon. and learned gentleman (Mr. R. Ward) as having stated that I had alleged that this design existed, and "with a view of overturning the liberties of the country." I then took the liberty of interrupting the hon. and learned gentleman, and stated, that though I alleged the design, I did not allege that it was entertained with that view and intention. I saw that that would be necessarily the result, but that I did not say that that was the object. In the debates that have since arisen, several gentlemen have expressed the same apprehensions, but have expressly disclaimed the imputation of the object. Sir, I wish however to be understood to disclaim that disclaimer. On that night I did not impute the intention; but I did not say that that intention did not exist. It was a matter of indifference to me looking at the result, whether it did exist or not: the result in either case would be the same. But when other gentlemen disclaim the belief of that object, I must say, that I was not then without my suspicions that it exists. And these suspicions which existed in my mind at that time, have received great additional weight and consistency since. The perseverance with which these enormous military establishments have been pushed forward, and all attempts to retrench them have been resisted, has given great weight to these suspicions. But still more the determination of his majesty's ministers to cram down the throats of the people, against their universal and unanimous opinion as expressed in petitions to this House, the most odious property tax, has increased and strengthened every suspicion I before entertained. A fiscal despotism, which this tax goes to establish, is as inimical to liberty, as a military despotism. It is in many respects, too, much more galling and more troublesome. A military tyrant may exercise a terrible tyranny in his own immediate neighbourhood, within the sphere of his own senses and the reach of the army which he commands: but those who live at a distance from him, and are somewhat removed from his influence, will of course feel his power less. Again, a military despot may not have a tyrannical disposition, he may be inclined to consult the good of his people, and may have wisdom to understand their interests. But a fiscal tyranny extends into every parish and corner of the land subjected to it. No distance is beyond its reach. It is, too, always active. No relaxation can be hoped for of its power. The property tax goes to erect a little tyrant in every village in the kingdom; not indeed armed with military power (though in truth I very much fear that if it be enacted, and the collection persevered in, the collector must go about attended with a file of soldiers in order to raise the money); but if not armed with military power this little fiscal tyrant will find his way into every one's house, will examine the most private transactions, and disturb the most retired families. I say therefore, that the fiscal tyranny of the income tax is in truth as destructive of liberty as the most absolute military tyranny. And be it observed too, that there cannot be found for the wish to support this tax the same pretences, which may be stated for a love of military power. There is no show nor parade here to gratify the puerile and contemptible vanity, which may be alleged as the motive in the other case. It can be, I conceive, no other than the pure love of tyranny, and a systematic determination to overthrow the liberties of the people and the constitution of the country.

Whatever suspicions, therefore, I before entertained, are now infinitely strengthened; whatever surmises before existed in my mind as to the object and motive for these military innovations, are almost reduced to a certainty; and I wish to be distinctly understood as disclaiming any share in the disclaimer which some gentlemen have put in of imputing such views and motives. Sir, I will not any longer detain the House at present; but beg to move, "That there be laid before this House, an account of the number and strength of military guards mounted within the bills of mortality on the 1st day of January of every year, from 1791 to 1816, both inclusive, distinguishing cavalry from infantry, and stating the number of sentries furnished from each guard, and the stations where posted."

Mr. *Robert Ward* said, that even if the noble lord had not expressly told the House he had been examining the works of Mr. Burke, it would have been easy to trace how much they had been the object of his study, and particularly one of the best of them, the Treatise on the Sublime and Beautiful. It was there laid down, that the great source of the sublime was obscurity; and in this view, the noble lord's speech was sublimity itself. His mind seemed to have conjured up so many terrors, first in regard to ministers—then not to ministers, but perhaps the court: then not so much the court, as perhaps the spirit of the people themselves; he disagreed with so many opinions, acquitting ministers of design—and then disagreed with his own opinions, accusing them of it; he did not mean to impute so many things, and then would not say he did not mean they might not be imputed, that really gentlemen would be glad if he would tell them exactly what it was he did mean. He conceived that the noble lord was horribly afraid; but of what, he could not collect; for by much the most terrific of his chimeras was the circumstance that the Prince Regent opened the parliament in a large military cocked hat. He had accused his noble friend (lord Castlereagh) of having not only used that terrible phrase "household troops," but with actually having sheltered himself behind Mr. Burke's authority, in his reform bill. Mr. Ward believed that his noble friend might have alluded to his bill for regulating the pay office, but it was of no sort of consequence whether it was there or not. This Mr. Ward knew, that the noble lord had himself committed a most egregious blunder, in his endeavour to teach his noble friend history, accompanying it, as he did, with a threat of impeachment, nay, even of execution. For he had made a distinction which no one could understand, between the protection of the law and of the constitution. Empson and Dudley, he said, had been executed for a breach of the constitution, though within the law. This was not so; for against all law and all constitution, they were put to death unheard, by attainder, and not for a breach of the constitution, though within the law, but for treason which they had not committed. It really behoved the noble lord, before he taxed others with mistakes of no sort of consequence, to take care of his own when so essentially connected with his argument. Reverting to the noble lord's fears, Mr. Ward said, he could only answer them as he did on a former night; he was welcome to indulge them if he pleased, but as he could give no proof, all that could be said by his side of the House was, that there was nothing at all in them.

Sir *Mark Wood* observed, that as the present discussion was not respecting the number of troops to be maintained in the country, he suspected the motion of the noble lord had proceeded on an erroneous view of the subject. He was of opinion that ministers could not do their duty in a satisfactory manner, if they proceeded to diminish the number of troops. It was possible that an explosion might take place in France in the course of a month. In what a deplorable situation, then, would the country stand, were she to be instantly stripped of all her defenders? The duke of Wellington might probably have occasion for more cavalry, and how ludicrous must ministers appear, were they to tell him that for the sake of saving a few thousand pounds, they had disbanded a considerable part of the army. What would the duke naturally say in such a case? And really were gentlemen to consider the very small sum which the country would gain by thus disbanding the bravest of our troops, they would not feel all that warmth they at present felt for a reduction of the army. In the different regiments of horse-guards and cavalry, the whole saving would only amount to 8000*l*. And was this an object for which our most gallant defenders were to be thrown on the world? Was such a paltry sum to be any consideration in this great country? But supposing the army to be as dangerous as it was represented, what were the sentiments of ministers? They never dreamt for a moment of making so large an establishment during peace, but wished it merely to be kept as an intermediate establishment till experience showed, whether or not the peace was to be permanent. Let gentlemen look back to the short peace of Amiens, and contemplate the enormous expense which was necessarily entailed on the country, in consequence of the premature disembodying of the army. He believed no man could be found, at all alive to the true interests of his country, who did not regret that measure. He was sorry to hear the establishment considered as arising from a love of gaudy show. It was requisite for the interest of the country, and requisite for the preservation of our advantages as individuals, that it should be kept up, at least for a limited period.

Sir *John Newport* said, the question before the House was not the reduction of troops—it was not the peace or war establishment of the country—it was simply a question to ascertain the numbers and stations of the guards employed in the metropolis every year since 1791. He deprecated the manner in which the hon. baronet had taken up the time of the House, by entering into foreign and extraneous matters. What they had to do with the question before the House he knew not; but supposed they were part of a speech prepared for the army estimates.

Lord *Palmerston* had no objection whatever to the motion of the noble lord. It would, perhaps, be difficult to furnish exactly the precise number employed in some of the years. He could, however, assure the noble lord, that the number of troopers on duty did not at present exceed forty-five, which was considerably fewer than when the king had his residence in town.

The motion was then agreed to.

Army Estimates.] The House having resolved itself into a committee of supply, to which the ordnance estimates were referred, lord Palmerston moved, that the sum of 332,692*l.* 11*s.* 6*d.* be voted, to defray the charges for the dragoon guards, and the royal waggon train."

Sir *M. W. Ridley* said, he understood that a great proportion of the cavalry at present embodied, were deficient in their complement of horses; he particularly alluded to the 6th dragoons and the Scotch greys, which had not above half their number. He suggested, whether it would not be wise to reduce the cavalry to the actual number of horses which they possessed. He thought the attention of the House ought particularly to be called to the manner in which the horses of the British army had been transported from France to this country on a late occasion. The animals, he observed, had not been conveyed in regular transports, but had been put into vessels of a description so improper, and in numbers so great, that many of them had been lamed, and others had actually died. He knew this to have been the case, particularly with the horses of many infantry officers, which by this imprudent practice had been utterly ruined. He objected, too, to the cavalry estimates being now for 20,000 men, when, last peace, they were not more than 12,000.

Lord *Castlereagh* said, that from the hon. baronet's own statement, the dragoon regiments were not in that state of perfection in which they ought to be. So far from being reduced, therefore, it was essential that their deficiency should be supplied. With respect to the manner in which the horses had been transported from France, he observed, that with a due regard to economy, from the great expense attending cavalry transports, the course adopted was by far the most advantageous. He was aware that the number of horses lost had amounted to about 200, but a saving had been effected to the public far beyond the value of those animals, by employing the vessels which had been taken into requisition on the occasion.

Sir *M. W. Ridley* said, that he was informed the horses had been so crowded, that some had fallen under the feet of others, and were actually suffocated. If the persons who had undertaken to superintend this business had misconducted themselves, he thought inquiry should be made into the circumstances of that misconduct.

Mr. *Warre* said, he understood that the contract made by government at Dover for transporting the cavalry was 25*s.* a horse, but it was a most expensive one; for day after day the people had to witness the disgusting sight of fine horses being dragged from the ships dead. Of this he himself could bear testimony, as he happened to be down at Dover at the time. If nothing else were considered, it was a species of ingratitude to those fine animals who had carried their riders through so many difficulties. He believed that square-rigged vessels were much better calculated to transport cavalry than the cutters which were usually employed in that service.

Lord *Palmerston* conceived that the view taken on the subject of the transportation of horses was considerably beyond what the real facts of the case warranted. It was very well known that the harbours on the French coast were exceedingly difficult to navigate, and it was therefore found much preferable to transport the horses in vessels which had always been accustomed to such a service; and he believed that, had it not been for the unusually bad weather, scarcely any of the horses would have been lost. With regard to the deficiency of horses in the cavalry regiments mentioned by the hon. baronet, it seemed to have been forgotten, that when the regiments had their full complement of horses, ten men per troop always remained dismounted.

Mr. *Ponsonby* thought that after what had fallen from an hon. gentleman on the other side of the House, it was necessary that some inquiry should take place into the subject.

Sir *John Newport* also pressed the necessity of inquiry.

Mr. *Bennet* complained of the augmentation of the cavalry, which had been carried to an enormous amount, merely for the purpose of protecting the revenue. It was impossible to hear what had been stated on this subject with regard to Ireland without feeling the greatest alarm. Four hundred parties of these troops had been stated to have been employed in that country for that purpose.

Mr. *Peel* explained, that he had stated that the troops were employed in 400 quarters, and that about 20 parties were occupied in suppressing illicit distillation.

Sir *M. W. Ridley* said, that the chief objection he had to the employment of these cavalry in the prevention of smuggling, was the danger of the rewards which would be offered, inducing them to swerve from the path of duty, and also the effect it would have upon their moral habits. He wished, however, to call the attention of the committee particularly to a part of the treaty of Paris, signed in November last, with respect to the employment of the military in France. It had been stipulated, that the collection of the taxes and customs should remain in the hands of the king of France, but that, in case of need, the British forces should lend their assistance. It appeared, therefore, that the English army was not only to maintain the Bourbons on the throne, but were also to collect the taxes for the French government. Was it a duty which the ministers of this country considered would have a beneficial effect upon the minds of the soldiers, to lend their aid to such disgraceful proceedings as were continually taking place in France? Ministers, it seemed, were not contented with employing the troops in collecting the revenue at home, but must send them abroad to do the same without any reason or utility.

General *Hope* defended the military establishment as proposed by ministers. With respect to the guards, he conceived that it was the best policy to augment their number, because the household troops had proved themselves worthy of the confidence placed in them. They were, in fact, the only remains of those heavy horse which in the seven years war distinguished themselves so much, and which were able to beat down the force of the cuirassiers. The hon. member then proceeded to point out the great deficiency of force in the year 1792, when there existed only one brigade of guards, amounting to 1200 men, which could be called efficient. It was at the period of the expedition to Egypt, under sir Ralph Abercromby, that the British army began to appear in its proper light; and a letter received by sir David Dundas, from that gallant general, fully exemplified the good effect of the system which was then laid down. Experience, he contended, was absolutely necessary to form good soldiers; and he quoted the duke of Wellington as an example, who, having studied the military art for twenty-five years, had now shone forth the glory of his country. He hoped, therefore, that these precautionary measures would not be rejected under the notion that the men who could be raised in a few weeks were as good soldiers, or as brave warriors, as those who had fought so many battles for their country. In his opinion, there never was a time when the army had so strong a claim upon the country, and he conceived that it would be the best policy, and the truest economy, to keep up the force which had been proposed.

Mr. *Wynn* perfectly concurred in what had fallen from his hon. friend as to the employment of the cavalry for revenue purposes only, more particularly as he had always understood that the military were to be called upon to act on important occasions only by the civil power. With respect also to the troops which were stationed at the places of entertainment, he was old enough to recollect when no soldier dared to act without the authority of the constable; but now things had taken a very different turn, and the military were suffered to act without control upon all occasions. He had intended to have moved an amendment to the resolution respecting the cavalry so employed, for the purpose of reducing them; but he found it would have been a useless waste or time, as ministers were determined to have the majority in all the divisions on the resolutions.

Lord *Castlereagh* declared, that there was no intention to emancipate the army from the control of the civil power. That was not done in Ireland, and was not in contemplation here. He agreed that it would be preferable to employ the soldiers otherwise; but nothing was easier than to make speeches to establish any particular point, which if adopted by government would cause the service of the country to stand still. There were only two modes of repressing smuggling. The first, which had been used by Mr. Pitt in 1792 was, to lower the duties so far, as to render smuggling unprofitable. But this was now impracticable, if it was intended to carry on the government of the country. Those duties could not be reduced without sacrificing eight millions of revenue. The other was to employ the military as it was now intended, which would only occasion an expenditure of 400,000*l.* whilst the slightest infraction of the system against smuggling might occasion a loss of two, three, or four millions of revenue. In order to prevent any deterioration in the discipline of the army, it was intended that only one half of each regiment should be employed on this service; the other half would be in a sort of depôt, subject to all the strictness of military regulations. If such a plan were not adopted the revenue might be broken down to such a degree, as to compel the House to inflict on the people much more grievous exactions in order to supply the deficiency.

Mr. *Abercrombie* concurred with his hon. friend in not wishing to move an amendment after the majority which he had seen on a former evening on the subject of the estimates. He wished, however, to remark on the explanation given by a noble lord opposite. That noble lord had been obliged to acknowledge, that a great injury was likely to be done to the troops, by being employed in preventing smuggling. The noble lord had given a cheerless prospect to the House. He had stated that there could, under present circumstances, be no reduction of taxes, and he had been forced to admit, that in endeavouring to keep them up to their present amount, the employment of a military force was necessary, which force was likely to be severely injured by such employment.

The resolution was agreed to. On the resolution, proposing a grant of 1,592,000*l.* for defraying the expense of the forces abroad, exclusive of the troops stationed in France, and in the territorial possessions of the India company, being put,

Mr. *Gordon* adverted to the increased establishment for Jamaica, to the amount of 4,000 men. He could not conceive its purpose, when no descent on that island was to be feared. The militia of Jamaica, into which every white man capable of bearing arms was bound to enter, appeared quite sufficient for maintaining internal police. As to the Ionian islands, he objected to the idea of taking them under our protection; we affected to give them independence and a flag of their own, while we fastened a large garrison upon them: this was too much in the French style of affording protection.

Lord *Palmerston* stated in reply, that 500 men of the Jamaica establishment were to be sent to Honduras, which would reduce the total to 3,500 men, of whom in that climate it was probable that not more than 3,000 would be effective. As to the West India garrisons generally, it was to be considered that we had now 6,500 black troops on foot. These would require at least 9,000 British troops to be mixed with them. It might be a question whether these black corps might not be applied to some other service, but this was a matter for future consideration. He conceived there were no two stations where an adequate force was more requisite than Malta and Corfu; for, if left too weak, they were liable to be taken by coup-de-main, and could only be recovered by a long and expensive siege.

Mr. *A. Grant* contended, that it would be extremely dangerous to keep up a less force in our West India colonies, particularly in Jamaica, than was proposed, and protested strongly against any reduction being made in them. He had had particular opportunities of information on this subject, and did not think that any great confidence could be placed on the black corps, which he viewed with extreme jealousy.

Mr. *Fremantle* ridiculed the idea of a sudden surprise of Malta in time of peace. He would ask, why not call on the settlements generally to maintain their own military establishment? This he conceived, might be effected by a very small tax on their exports and imports. The exports to Gibraltar, he understood, in one year amounted to not less than two millions.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that the suggestion had not escaped the attention of government; it was to be considered, however, that the trade with the West India islands and with Canada, being subject to a strict monopoly, was in fact already taxed. At the same time he had no doubt that the legislature of those islands would lend their assistance to the support of the troops. As to our possessions in the Mediterranean, an inquiry had been directed, for the purpose of ascertaining how much they could raise for the support of the different establishments; but this would require a length of time, and we could not this year hope for any considerable reduction of expense in that quarter.

Mr. *Rose* was astonished at the proposal of taxing the exports to Gibraltar. He was certain that the general amount of these exports did not exceed 600,000*l.* and of these not 180,000*l.* were consumed at Gibraltar, which was a mere depôt for goods *in transitu* to other parts of the Mediterranean. To impose a tax on them, therefore, would be taxing our own manufactures. The same was the case at Malta, where our manufactures only entered *in transitu*, and were always met in the Turkish ports with the competition of the French merchants.

Mr. *Wynn* thought a force of 2,000 or even 1,500 men sufficient to garrison Malta. If the troops were to overawe the black population of Jamaica, it was but fair and just that the inhabitants of that island should pay for that protection.

Mr. *Marryat* said, that every gentleman acquainted with the commerce of the Mediterranean must be aware of the competition with which our manufacturers had to struggle. If we laid a duty on our exports to Gibraltar or Malta, we should drive our own manufactures out of the market. The same observation applied to the West Indies.

Mr. *Wynn* asked if any part of the expense which the custody of Buonaparté at St. Helena threw upon us, was to be borne by the four great powers, who had an equal interest with ourselves in his safe custody?

Lord *Castlereagh* said, the other great powers were perfectly disposed to relieve us of the custody of that prisoner. But having thrown himself into our hands, it would be very ungracious to deliver him up to the custody of any other power. It was certainly most advantageous, too, for the security and repose of Europe, that he should remain in our hands. Under these circumstances he did not see that we could in justice make a demand on any of the powers in question.

The resolution was agreed to. After which, the chairman reported progress, and asked leave to sit again.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Thursday, March 14.

PETITIONS AGAINST THE PROPERTY TAX.] Lord *Montford* presented a petition from the occupiers of land in and about Chertsey against the Property Tax. He understood that it was in contemplation to propose a renewal of the property tax under some modification, by which it was to bear less heavily on the farmer than before. But, even with such modification, the petitioners stated that they would be obliged to pay, not on profit, but on loss; because, after payment of their rents and taxes, they had no profits at all.

The Earl of *Galloway* presented a petition from the owners and occupiers of land in Wigtoun, praying relief against the property tax, and other taxes pressing heavily on the agricultural interest. Both parliament and the government, his lordship said, must now be fully convinced of the dreadful state of distress to which the agricultural interest was reduced, and it was high time that the legislature should interfere, and apply a prompt remedy. However important the discussions might be, in which parliament was now engaged—he alluded to the property tax, and the establishments proposed to be kept up—he would venture to say that they were nothing compared with the subject of the distressed situation of the agricultural interest. It was unnecessary for him now to enter into any details on that subject. It had been well treated on a late occasion, and in a manner which did great honour to those who took a part in the discussion. But there was one point to which he wished to call their lordships' attention, for the purpose of correcting what he conceived to be a great error in a statement which had been made to the House on the subject of the payment of the property tax. It had been stated, that Scotland did not pay its proportion of the tax, and that it was not collected there with the same rigour as in England. Now, he could take upon himself to say that, as far as the agricultural interest was concerned, it was raised in Scotland, not only with as much, but a great deal more rigour than in England. As to the commercial and manufacturing interests, he could neither avouch nor deny the statement. He did not know with certainty how that might be; but he was perfectly convinced that on the landed interest the tax pressed more rigorously in Scotland than in England. In the latter country there were lands held without leases, and the tax was calculated upon the ground of certain parochial assessments. But in Scotland almost all the tenants had leases, which, with other writings, must be produced; and the tax was calculated on the highest value, which was considered as equal to an additional 3 per cent.

Lord *Holland* agreed that the agricultural interest was reduced to a state of the greatest distress. That unfortunately was a proposition which no one could deny. But the state of the commercial and manufacturing interests also was such, that the whole ought to be made the subject of a solemn investigation in parliament, with a view to ascertain the causes and apply the proper remedy. This was his opinion, which he had shown, not by speaking, but by his vote on a late occasion, when the majority of their lordships, notwithstanding the petitions which came up from all quarters, and which presented such a picture of distress, refused to go into a committee on the state of the nation. But he was astonished to find that the noble lord, and, he supposed, the petitioners, appeared to consider the questions as to the property tax, and the immense military establishments now proposed to be kept up, as distinct from the distresses of the agricultural interest. In his opinion, all these questions were most closely connected. If they were to have these vast establishlishments, and the expenditure consequent upon them, the nation must be grievously taxed in order to support them. The people must, in that view of the matter, be burthened with taxes which, in the present state of the country, they are unable to pay. But what chiefly called him up was, the observation which the noble lord had expressed on a statement made by him on a former occasion, relative to the payment of this tax. When he said that the tax was not paid in Scotland in the same manner as in England, he spoke from such information as he had been enabled to procure—their lordships having denied him the means of investigation by official documents. But the noble lord himself had not denied that the statement might be correct as to the commercial and manufacturing interests in Scotland; and that statement had been called forth by a petition, which must have been heard with astonishment and dismay, from a commercial city of Scotland, in favour of the property tax. He had then stated, that according to the best of his information, the amount of property tax, paid by that city hardly equalled its payments for house tax; and he had then said, and now again said, that if they were to have this property tax continued in spite of the almost universal voice of the country raised against it, it would be the duty of parliament to take care—and he said so without any invidious allusion to Scotland in particular—that it should be paid with due equality and impartiality in all parts of the country.

The petitions were ordered to lie on the table.

MARRIAGE OF THE PRINCESS CHARLOTTE OF WALES.] The Earl of Liverpool presented a message from the Prince Regent, announcing that his royal highness had given his consent to the marriage of her royal highness the Princess Charlotte Augusta, with his serene highness Prince Leopold of Cobourg. [See this days proceedings of the Commons.] The message having been read by the lord chancellor, and afterwards by the clerk,

The Earl of *Liverpool* said, that when he communicated to the House last night that he expected to receive the commands of his royal highness the Prince Regent, to bring down to the House a message on the subject of the marriage of her royal highness the princess Charlotte of Wales, he did so from a belief that it might be the wish of many noble lords to attend on the occasion, who without such notice, might have no opportunity of being informed that it was intended to bring down a message of this description on this day. He had found, upon investigation, that it had been the invariable practice, on all occasions of delivering messages of this nature from the Crown, to move an address upon it on the same day on which it was delivered; and he was sure their lordships would not be disposed now to pay less respect to the royal message than had been paid at former periods, but would be anxious to follow that course which had been uniformly pursued on similar occasions. The subject of the message was of the highest importance, and must be deeply interesting to their lordships, and to all classes of his majesty's subjects. Whatever difference of opinion there might be among them on political subjects, they must all feel disposed to concur in such measures as might be best calculated to promote the comfort and happiness of the royal family. He was persuaded, therefore, that he should be acting contrary to the feeling of the House, if he were to detain their lordships from coming to a vote on the address which he was about to propose, by entering into any details on this subject at present. But he felt it proper to say—and he said so, not as using words of course, and expressions of mere compliment, but as having had an opportunity of ascertaining the fact from the best sources of information—that with respect to the illustrious prince upon whom his royal highness the Prince Regent had thought proper to bestow his daughter in marriage, he believed there was on the continent of Europe but one sentiment as to his personal merits and respectability. He was not now speaking of the opinion merely of the members of that illustrious person's own house and family, but of the general opinion and sentiment of all the courts of Europe—of the opinions of his equals and his inferiors—all of whom agreed in bearing testimony to the propriety of his conduct and the goodness of his character. This was not the time to say any thing as to the provision which it might be fitting to make for these illustrious persons on the occasion of their marriage: that question would come regularly before their lordships at another time. He would only now say, with reference to that point, that he had paid the utmost attention to the subject, and considered it both with a view to what was due to the illustrious parties themselves, and also with a view to what would be creditable to the country, without any improper extravagance. But he could not let this part of the subject pass without this observation; that when their lordships came to consider what provision it would be proper to make upon this occasion, he trusted their lordships would take care that it should be made in such a manner, that the illustrious persons of whom he had been speaking might have the free enjoyment, in the first instance, of their own income. He said this, because he had observed, that where a provision had been made, though it was sufficient for its purpose, yet, from the want of such a regulation as he had mentioned on the part of parliament, it had become altogether insufficient. Their lordships, therefore, he was persuaded, would be disposed to place the illustrious persons in a situation in which they would have the free use of their own income. It was their wish, he was authorized to say, to confine their expenses strictly within their income; and saying this, he relied confidently on the liberality of parliament, that, with every proper attention to economy, it would give that income and assistance which would be worthy of a great nation on the occasion of a marriage of such importance. He should, therefore, without longer detaining their lordships at present, move, "That an humble address be presented to his royal highness the Prince Regent, returning the thanks of the House for his gracious communication, and to express their entire satisfaction with the marriage of her royal highness the princess Charlotte Augusta to a protestant prince of so illustrious a house—an event which must be satisfactory to all classes of his majesty's subjects, and conducive to the best interests of the country; and to assure his royal highness, that he may rely with confidence on the concurrence of the House of Lords in such measures as may be necessary to conclude this marriage, and to demonstrate the affectionate zeal and dutiful regard of the House towards his royal highness and the royal family, as well as its disposition to pay every proper attention to what is due to the honour and dignity of the Crown."

The question having been put upon the address by the lord Chancellor, it was agreed to *nem. dis.*

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, March 14.

PRINCE REGENT'S MESSAGE RESPECTING THE MARRIAGE OF THE PRINCESS CHARLOTTE OF WALES.] Lord Castlereagh appeared at the bar with the following Message from the Prince Regent:

"George *P. R.*

"The Prince Regent, acting in the name and on the behalf of his Majesty, having given the royal consent to a marriage between his daughter, her royal highness the princess Charlotte Augusta, and his serene highness Leopold George Frederick, prince of Cobourg of Saalfeld, has thought fit to communicate the same to this House.

"His Royal Highness is fully persuaded, that this alliance cannot but be acceptable to all his majesty's faithful subjects; and the many proofs which his Royal Highness has received of the affectionate attachment of this House to his majesty's person and family, leave him no room to doubt of the concurrence and assistance of this House in enabling him to make such a provision, with a view to the said marriage, as may be suitable to the honour and dignity of the country.

"G. *P. R.*"

The Message having been brought up and read by the Speaker,

Lord *Castlereagh* said, the course usually pursued on similar occasions was, to take the earliest opportunity of going into a committee on a message relating to a circumstance so auspicious as that which had just been communicated to the House. But while they did this, their affection and the deep interest which they took in all that so nearly concerned that illustrious family, by whom we had now the happiness to be governed, and whose sway had so largely contributed to the liberties of Englishmen, had always suggested on the moment an expression of gratitude for the message which had been brought down, coupled with an assurance that they would proceed without delay to take it into their most serious consideration, in order to make such provision as might appear suitable to the high rank of the parties, and consistent with the dignity of the nation. On the present occasion he anticipated no difficulty in persuading the House to take this course on the auspicious and gratifying event which he had been authorized to communicate this day. No argument was necessary on his part to awaken their attachment to that illustrious personage, who now so gloriously presided over the government of this country, or to that distinguished individual who was the object of the present message. The alliance about to be contracted was one which promised to be not less conducive to the comfort and happiness of the parties than to the advantage and glory of the nation. He felt it impossible to abstain from congratulating the House on the character of the individual who was now about to be united to the royal family of England by marriage. In speaking on this subject it would ill become him to offer any thing like flattery to prince Leopold, but he spoke in the hearing of those who could correct him if he overrated any thing, when he asserted, that there was but one opinion of his merits throughout Europe; and that his principles, his manners, his habits, all commanded admiration, and proved him to possess those qualifications which fitted him for domestic enjoyment, and which were necessary to form a suitable consort for the princess Charlotte. What provision it might be proper to make, it would be for the House to consider on going into a committee on the message. In deciding on this question, he doubted not they would mark their attachment to the royal family by uniting that liberality which became the character of the country and the splendour of the Crown, with that due attention to economy which ought never to be lost sight of by parliament. There was only one consideration which he would press on them, as that which he was anxious they would keep particularly in view. He hoped that in making a provision suitable to the high situation of the parties, it would be so framed, on their first settlement in life, as to guard against the necessity of recurring to the liberality of parliament a second time. The noble lord then moved,

"That an humble Address be presented to his royal highness the Prince Regent, to return his royal highness the thanks of this House for his most gracious communication of the intended marriage between his royal highness's daughter, her royal highness the princess Charlotte Augusta, and his serene highness Leopold George Frederick, prince of Cobourg of Saalfeld; to express our entire satisfaction at the prospect of an alliance with a Protestant prince of so illustrious a family, which we doubt not will contribute to the happiness of his royal highness and his illustrious daughter, as well as prove conducive to the best interests of the country; and to assure his royal highness that this House will immediately proceed to the consideration of his royal highness's gracious message, in such a manner as shall demonstrate the zeal, duty, and affectionate attachment of this House to his royal highness, a just sense of the eminent virtues and merit of her royal highness the princess Charlotte, and a due regard to the honour and dignity of the royal family."

The address was agreed to *nem. con.*

PETITIONS AGAINST THE PROPERTY TAX.] Petitions against the Property Tax were presented from the parish of St. Mary-le-Bone, the merchants of New Malton, the occupiers of land in the county of Hereford, the inhabitants of the county of Hertford, the inhabitants of St. John Southwark, the Ratho Farmers Club, the magistrates of Rutherglen, and the inhabitants of Evesham, and Mitcham. Colonel Foley having presented the petition from Hereford,

General *Thornton* said, the only reason which could be given for the imposition of such a tax was the necessity for it. It had been of great service to the country in the time of war, but in a time of peace, if it could possibly be done without, it ought not to be renewed. It had been said, that it did not fall on the lower orders, but in his opinion it fell more on them than on any other persons, because it subjected them to the very worst of evils, the want of employment. It had been well said by Mr. Burke, that the rich were trustees for the benefit of the poor, that the hoards of the rich were the banking houses of the lower classes. One of the strongest objections against the tax was, that it held out to the trading and industrious part of the community, a great temptation to fraud. He had suggested a tax, which he thought might produce not less than 700,000*l.* a sum which would go a considerable way towards supplying the wants of government; this was a tax on the property of absentees, who by leaving their country at a crisis like the present, occasioned, in the diminution of consumption, a great loss to agriculture. It was, in his opinion, a fair and proper tax. His vote on the subject of the property tax, should be guided by an impartial consideration of the arguments to be brought forward in justification of such a tax, during such a calamity as the present. The modifications would, in his opinion, make the tax worse. It would certainly be a great calamity if such a tax were to be continued.

Mr. Alderman *C. Smith* said, he could not vote for this tax. He thought his majesty's ministers ought to give way to the voice of the people, so strongly expressed upon this subject. With respect to the peace establishment, he thought that which had been proposed was not greater than the state of Europe required.

Mr. *Calvert* said, he did not understand the hon. general, for he had spoken against the tax, had expressed every possible objection to it, and yet had stated his intention of voting for it. To enable the country and his constituents, if he had any (for he understood some members had scarcely any), to understand what he really meant, he gave the gallant general this opportunity of explaining himself.

General *Thornton* said, unless he saw that the honour and prosperity of the country absolutely demanded the renewal of the property tax, he certainly should not vote for it. But he had not yet fully made up his mind on the subject. He certainly was most anxious that ministers should give way to the wishes of the people, but his vote would depend very much on the arguments which should be brought forward in the discussions shortly to come on. If he found that the renewal was not justified by necessity, he should vote against the tax; if he found it necessary for the public credit, and the honour of the country, he should very unwillingly give his vote in favour of it; and if he felt any doubt on the subject, he would withdraw himself from the House without voting.

Mr. *Brand* said, he held in his hand a petition from the noblemen, gentlemen, and other inhabitants of the county of Hertford, adopted at a meeting regularly convened and most respectably attended. The petitioners observed, that in the financial difficulties of the country, during a war of unexampled magnitude, they had cheerfully submitted to various oppressive taxes, in the hopes that, with the termination of that war, they would at once have been relieved from them. The petitioners did not pray for the relief of any war tax in particular, but against all generally. They stated their conviction, that nothing but an exact and rigid system of economy, could extricate the country from its present distress; and that they more particularly expected, from the promises in the speech from the throne, that some economical measures would have been adopted. They could not therefore but share in the disappointment felt at present by many of his majesty's most loyal subjects, on finding that no sinecures had been abolished, no economical measures had been adopted; and that the emoluments of public officers had not been reduced. As all other articles had fallen in price, it was proper that the emoluments of office should be reduced also. But what would they feel when they learnt, not only that there had been no reduction, but that an increase of the salaries in almost all the departments had taken place? Had the ancient salaries been retained, the value would have been increased in proportion to the reduction in price of all articles. The petition was most respectfully worded, but the petitioners did not the less keenly feel the disappointment of all their just hopes and expectations.

Mr. *Howorth*, on presenting the petition from the borough of Evesham against the property tax, said, it was, in his opinion, a tax which the most urgent necessity could alone justify. The people, in submitting to such a burthen, confidently expected that it would cease with the war; and the proposed renewal of it in a time of peace was a measure which filled them with a just and well-founded alarm. He certainly could not see any necessity for the imposition of a tax like this during a period of unprecedented distress, and in opposition to the wishes of the people. The discussions which had already taken place, in his opinion, had been productive of great benefit; and he was determined, therefore, if his health permitted him, not to give a silent vote on a question of such importance to the country. He said, that this system of taxation, whilst it drained the pockets of the people, added incalculably to the influence of the Crown; the inquisitorial powers confided to the commissioners had a direct tendency to the introduction of arbitrary power; and the principle of the tax was wholly incompatible with, and utterly repugnant to, the principles of a free constitution.

Mr. *Calvert*, seeing the hon. member for Surrey in his place, wished to set himself right with respect to what had been stated by that hon. gentleman on presenting the petition from the county of Surrey. He had not been present on the occasion alluded to; he had made the most diligent inquiries, and he found that the House did not then contain above 30 persons. The hon. member was reported in the newspapers to have stated, that the petition was carried by a large majority of the meeting at Epsom. He himself had been at the meeting, and he could say, that though one or two gentlemen spoke in favour of the property tax and the proposed establishment, yet when the question was first put, only one gentleman held up his hand against the petition, but he afterwards did not hold it up, and the question was carried unanimously.

Mr. *Holme Sumner* appealed to every person acquainted with the business of the House, if any imputation could with propriety attach to him, of having purposely presented the petition when the House was empty. As to any misrepresentations in the newspapers of what he said in that House, he would not deign to make any answer on such a subject; but he appealed to any of the honourable members opposite, who were in the House on the occasion alluded to, whether the manner in which he mentioned the petition, was worthy or unworthy of the respectable meeting at which it was adopted.

Mr. *Calvert* said, he had mentioned the subject in the spirit of friendship, in order that the hon. member might set himself right with his constituents; whether he took it in any other sense or not, was a matter of indifference to him.

Mr. *Bennet* said, he was present when the petition in question was presented, and could say with great truth, that there never had been a petition presented, accompanied by a fuller statement of its contents, nor could any hon. gentleman have spoken in more respectful terms of the meeting by which the petition had been passed. He had no recollection of the words used by the hon. gentleman, with reference to the number of persons by whom the petition was approved.—The petitions were ordered to lie on the table.

MOTIONS RESPECTING THE BANK OF ENGLAND.] Mr. *Grenfell* inquired, whether the right hon. the chancellor of the exchequer would wish him, in consequence of the very thin attendance of members, to postpone his motion relative to the transactions between the bank of England and the public, to another opportunity. He was perfectly ready to proceed. But, if the right hon. gentleman thought it desirable, he would renew his notice.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* thought it was better that the hon. gentleman should proceed. He regretted that a subject of so much importance should be discussed in so thin a House; but, in consequence of the great pressure of public business, he was afraid, if the motion were put off, that a more convenient opportunity for considering it would not occur.

Mr. *Grenfell* then proceeded to address the House. He had hoped, he observed, for a full attendance on this occasion, and he was extremely sorry that he was disappointed. That circumstance could not, however, be attributed to him, since sufficient notice had been given of the motion. The nature of the propositions which he meant to submit to the House, appeared to him to be so free from objection, that he had at first flattered himself he should have little more to do this day than to read them, in his place, without troubling the House to enter into any discussion. But having since been given to understand that he was to be opposed—he would not say by his right hon. friend the chancellor of the exchequer; for though he might on this, as on former occasions, present himself in the front of the battle against him (Mr. Grenfell) on this subject, yet he was confident there were few persons who heard him, who did not believe, as he did, that the right hon. gentleman did not at all stand forward in defence of that exchequer over which he presided, and which he (Mr. Grenfell) did not mean to attack, but the interests of which would be promoted by what he had in view. But, supposing that the right hon. gentleman intended to put himself forward, as an auxiliary, and as an unwilling one, to fight the battle of the bank of England, it inflicted on him the necessity of trespassing on the House, for a short period. He could assure the House, that bearing in grateful recollection the patience with which he was heard, on a former night, when he was obliged to go at considerable length into the subject, it would be his endeavour now, as well as on any other occasion, to compress what he had to offer, into as narrow a compass as possible. He should therefore make but one or two preliminary observations, before he proceeded to state to the House (and, if necessary he would take the sense of the House on his motion, even in its present thin state) the first proposition he had to submit to them; reserving to himself the right, when he introduced his other propositions, of making such observations and remarks as they seemed to call for. He would, in the first place state, that the propositions were, with little alteration, certainly with no substantial difference, the same with the resolutions which he presented to the House (but on which he did not call for any opinion) towards the end of the last session, namely, on the 13th of June. They were resolutions of fact, giving, as he presumed, a correct view of the statements, and their results, contained in the voluminous accounts which he had the honour to move for last session, and which the House had ordered to be laid before them. The bank of England, in consequence of this proceeding, called also for accounts on this subject, and, in their resolutions, they showed to the House and the public, their view of the transactions between them and government. Those resolutions were introduced at so late a period last session (he did not mean to insinuate intentionally), that it was wholly impracticable to have any discussion of the subject that could be advantageous, An arrangement was therefore proposed, and a general understanding took place. that the consideration of the several accounts, and of the resolutions of the bank of England, and of those presented by himself should be put off until an early period of the present session. To this he immediately acceded, because, from the outset, he had distinctly stated to the House, that he meant to propose nothing that would interfere with the then existing engagements between the bank and the public; but that he wished, at that time, to lay the foundation for some ulterior regulation on the subject, previous to the 5th of the ensuing April, when all the existing agreements would expire. Thus ended the last session of parliament with respect to the bank; and he certainly took the earliest opportunity of calling the attention of the House to the subject. On the second day of the session he gave a notice, for the purpose of redeeming the pledge he had given to the House, and to afford the House an opportunity of redeeming the pledge which, as it appeared to him, they had given to the public, for entering into an investigation of those transactions. He, therefore on the 13th of last month, moved for a committee, which he conceived to be the best way of going into the necessary inquiry. The House, however, thought proper to negative the proposition. Now, as a misunderstanding as to the effect of the decision come to on that occasion had gone forth to the public, namely, that the circumstance of that motion being negatived, operated as a close and termination to all farther inquiry on this subject, he wished to undeceive those who entertained such an opinion. He need not state within those walls, that the vote had no such effect. It had only this effect—the expression of an opinion on the part of the House against the mode of inquiry then submitted to them. But the House would bear him out in saying, that the whole question was still open to their consideration; and that they were competent to go into it, in any way the House might think proper. He could assure the House, that no exertion would be wanting on his part, to do that justice to the public, with reference to the transactions between the government and the bank, which had been so long denied to them. Satisfied as he was, that without doing any thing that could be called a breach or infraction of the public faith towards the bank of England, they ought, particularly in this time of distress, to look to the bank as a resource for many millions, which were now productive to them, not by way of loan, as the bill, which would be discussed this night, recognized, but as a matter of right—and being also convinced, that the public ought to demand a considerable reduction of the sum charged for the management of the public debt—he was wholly at a loss to conjecture, on what principle, or on what ground the bank of England could oppose the resolutions he should submit to the House. They were not encumbered with theory or speculation; they consisted of a mere detail of dry facts, founded on papers placed on the table of the House by the bank themselves—and the most of them copied verbatim into the resolutions which the bank had sanctioned. Therefore he knew not on what ground they could refuse their concurrence to his motion; unless, indeed, they were disposed to act on the principle which had directed their conduct for the last twenty years—a principle of mystery and concealment; unless they wished to have it understood, that these were transactions that would not bear the light—that shrank from the touch of inquiry and investigation. He hoped the gentlemen opposite would state, if it were possible, some satisfactory reasons for opposing his resolutions. The hon. gentleman then moved—

1. "That it appears, that there was paid by the public to the bank of England, for managing the national debt, including the charge for contributions on loans and lotteries, in the year ending 5th July, 1792, the sum of 99,803*l.* 12*s.* 5*d.*; and that there was paid for the like service, in the year ending 5th April, 1815, upon the debt, as it stood in April, 1814, the sum of 281,568*l.* 6*s.* 11¼*d.*; being an increase of 181,764*l.* 14*s.* 6¼*d.*; to which must now be added, the allowance for management on the increase of the unredeemed debt since April 1814: in addition to which, the bank of England have charged at the rate of 1,250*l.* per million on the amount of property duty received at the bank on profits arising from professions, trades, and offices.

2. " That the total amount of bank notes and bank post bills, in circulation in the years 1795 and 1796 (the latter being the year previous to the restriction on cash payments), and in the year 1814, was as follows:

1795, Feb. 1, 12,735,520*l.* and Aug. 1, 11,214,000*l.*
1796, Feb. 1, 10,784,740*l.* and Aug. 1, 9,856,110*l.*
1814, Feb. 1, 25,154,950*l.* and Aug. 1, 28,802,450*l.*

3. " That at present, and during many years past, more particularly since the year 1806, considerable sums of public money, forming together an average stationary balance amounting to many millions, have been deposited with, or otherwise placed in the custody of the bank of England, acting in this respect as the bankers of the public.

4. " That it appears, from a report ordered to be printed the 10th of August, 1807, from the committee on the public expenditure of the united kingdom, that the aggregate amount of balances and deposits of public money in the hands of the bank of England, including bank notes deposited in the exchequer, made up in four different periods of the quarter ending 5th January, 1807, fluctuated betwixt the sums of 11,461,200*l.* and 12,198,239*l.* including bank notes deposited in the chests of the exchequer; or, 8,178,536*l.* and 9,948,400*l.* excluding bank notes deposited at the exchequer.

5. "That the aggregate amount of such deposits, together with the exchequer bills and bank notes deposited in the chests of the four tellers of the exchequer, was, on an average, in the year 1814, 11,966,371*l.* including bank notes deposited at the exchequer, amounting to 642,264*l.*; or, 11,324,107*l.*, excluding bank notes deposited at the exchequer; and that in the year 1815, the same deposits, amounting, on an average, to 11,942,493*l.*, including bank notes deposited at the exchequer.

6. "That it appears, that this aggregate amount of deposits, together with such portions of the amount of bank notes and bank post bills in circulation, as may have been invested by the bank in securities bearing interest, was productive, during the same period, of interest and profit to the bank of England.

7. "That the only participation hitherto enjoyed by the public, since the year 1806, in the profits thus made on such deposits by the bank, has consisted in a loan of three millions, advanced to the public by the bank, by the 46th Geo. 3, cap. 41, bearing 3 per cent. interest; which loan was discharged in December, 1814; and in another loan of three millions, advanced to the public by the bank, by the 48th Geo. 3, cap. 3, free of any charge of interest; which loan became payable in December, 1814, but has, by an act of the present session of parliament, cap. 16, been continued to the 5th of April, 1816.

8. "That this House will forthwith take into consideration the advantages derived by the bank, as well from the management of the national debt, as from the amount of balances of public remaining in their hands, with the view to the adoption of such an arrangement, when the engagements now subsisting shall have expired, namely, after the 5th day of April next, as may be consistent with what is due to the interests of the public, and to the rights, credit, and stability, of the bank of England."

On the first resolution being put,

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* observed, that the charge of mystery and concealment, which the hon. gentleman had made against the bank, was not borne out by the fact. Since the restriction on cash payments, and particularly since the appointment of the committee of public expenditure, in 1807, a mass of information, with respect to the affairs of the bank, had been laid before the House, which had never before been thought of. As this subject had been twice before the House recently, first, when the hon. gentleman proposed the appointment of a committee, and again, when the House were called on to confirm certain agreements between the bank and the public, he did not feel it necessary to enter at length into the question. The final resolution of the hon. gentleman was the only one of the series that called for observation, since it was of a practical nature, and the others were merely affirmations of certain accounts, correct in themselves, but capable of being applied differently, when brought to bear on the subject under consideration. That resolution pledged the House "forthwith to take into consideration the advantages derived by the bank, as well from the management of the national debt, as from the amount of balances of public money remaining in their hands, with the view to the adoption of such an arrangement, when the engagements now subsisting shall have expired, as might be consistent with what is due to the interests of the public, and to the rights, credit, and stability, of the bank of England." Now, he should have thought it almost impossible, as these points might fairly be brought under their consideration, when the Bank Loan bill was submitted to a committee of the whole House, that the hon. gentleman should have pursued any other course for the purpose of inquiry. The object he had in view would be absolutely obtained by the order of the House; for it would be his duty, under that order, to lay before a committee the provisions of the bill recently introduced. The right hon. gentleman then observed, that the profits which the bank derived from the management of the national debt, were recognised by an act of the legislature, which had a prospective operation. That act was passed in the year 1808, and it was adapted to any future change of circumstances. It provided, that in case the amount of the national debt was enlarged, then an increased allowance was to be granted for managing it; and *vice versâ.* In conclusion, the right hon. gentleman observed, that it would promote the business of the House if the discussion took place in the next stage of the Bank Loan bill. He therefore should move, as an amendment, "That the other orders of the day be now read."

Mr. *Tierney* did not think the chancellor of the exchequer had proved, very satisfactorily, that the gentlemen of the bank were fond of publicity. If he grounded himself on their resolutions of the last session, he was right; for, at that time, to court a little popularity, they expressed a strong desire that the whole of their transactions with the public might be taken into consideration. This all seemed very fair. But what was done afterwards? Before the meeting of parliament, the right hon. gentleman and the directors of the bank made a bargain, which could not be done away. And then the right hon. gentleman turned round, when inquiry was called for, and said, "there are two bills before the House, which will afford you a sufficient opportunity for discussing this question." He also stated, that there was a great mass of papers, connected with this subject, before the House. But he must be aware, that the possession of papers, and the appointment of a committee, were two very different things. If they wished to see the advantages of a committee, they ought to look back, historically, to what had been done by the intervention of one. The advantages which were last gained by the public from the bank, were obtained by a committee, similar to that which his hon. friend now wished to be appointed. Late in the last session, the gentlemen of the bank thought it was very well to call for a committee, when they knew that it could not be got; but now, when it would be useful to appoint one, it was found very inconvenient to support the principle. The right hon. gentleman told them that there was a bill in progress, which would afford them an opportunity of arguing this question. Now, he considered that bill to be an insult to the House of Commons. It ought never to have been introduced without the sanction of a committee; and the proceeding which had been adopted convinced him that there was too close an intercourse between the right hon. the chancellor of the exchequer and the directors of the bank. The directors courted a committee. Their resolution, on that point, was copied, syllable for syllable, from that of his hon. friend. The right hon. gentleman said, there was no necessity for one, since parliament could exercise its discretion on the bill. But what said one of the most discreet of the directors, on a former occasion? "A bargain," said he, "is made, and if you do not fulfil it, look to your situation." And what was that situation? Why, the directors had the right hon. gentleman so completely under their thumb, that he could not disoblige them without danger. He was land-locked, and, from the port in which he was placed, he could not depart. Two or three months before parliament met, the right hon. gentleman made a bargain which he ought not to have done; and then he came down to the House, with his chains on, and made a speech, informing them of the transaction which had taken place, and which was intended to debar their inquiry. The right hon. gentleman was master of his own feelings; and, if he felt no degradation, when he was compelled to proceed in this manner, he could not help it—it was a matter of taste. [A laugh]. But certainly the House never was so degraded before. Mr. Tierney said he was of opinion, that almost all our ministers had been too much in the hands of the bank. They might be told, that, but for the bank, the war could not have been carried on. He believed, if proper care had been taken, they would have been glad to receive sixpences where they received shillings. But now the evil was grown almost beyond the hope of suppression. The bank now came to the House, when they wished to investigate certain public transactions, and said, "The minister has made a bargain with us—that bargain being concluded, you have no right to deliberate on it." This was a most pitiable situation, and one from which, if any gentleman could show him the way to escape, he was ready to adopt it. But he could not see, in the present state of things, when they were at the mercy of the right hon. gentleman and his worthy colleagues, any good that could result from wading through the mass of figures that was placed on their table. Some gentlemen contended that this was the money of the bank; others were of opinion, that it was the money of the public. He certainly agreed with the latter; and, therefore, he conceived they had a right to make use of it, without paying for the loan. The conduct of the bank towards the public appeared to him just the same as that of his private banker would be, if, having one hundred pounds in his hands, and having demanded it from him, he was answered, "You shall have it, but you must pay me four per cent. for it; and you may consider it very generous in me that I do not charge you five. If he were compelled to put up with the imposition once, he would take special care that he should not be subjected to it again; for he would never deposit another hundred pounds in the same hands. In conclusion, the right hon. gentleman apologised, not to the House, but to the select party then met together, for having detained them so long.

Mr. S. *Thornton* argued, that the directors of the bank of England, as trustees, were bound to see that neither the public nor the proprietors were injured by their proceedings. Individuals might view the transactions between the government and the bank in different lights, but, he conceived, that the House of Commons was not the place where the question was to be settled. Under the constitution of the country, the executive power was that by which transactions of this nature were to be directed in the first instance. He concluded, that the arrangement made with the bank could not be broken in upon without a breach of good faith. He represented that institution as having rendered the country the most essential services, and strongly opposed the motion.

Sir *John Newport* contended, and founded his argument on a resolution of the House, that it was the province of parliament, and not of the chancellor of the exchequer, or of the government, to consider of the transactions which took place between the public and the bank. He protested against the chancellor of the exchequer and the directors of the bank settling what benefits should be derived by the bank and by the public; because, by such a proceeding, the right hon. gentleman was forced into a combat so unequal, that he had not the least chance of gaining any advantage over his opponents. He would ask, at what period it was, that the House and the public derived the greatest benefit from a transaction with the bank of England? It was when a committee of that House was appointed, contrary to the wish of the directors of the bank. Why were the directors always against the appointment of committees, to look into their affairs? Because, when they had to deal with the chancellor of the exchequer, they found that they were masters; but when they had to encounter a committee of that House, they met with those who were able to cope with them. The question was simple, in the extreme; it merely came to this—whether the parliament, acting for the country, would be the trustees of the public money, or suffer the bank directors to dole it out, piecemeal, as they thought fit, asking what they pleased for the loan of it? Would such a system be tolerated by any private individual? If not, why should the constitutional trustees of the public money submit to it? He knew of no instance in which the public were thus treated by a chartered company, except one; and that was, when the bank of Ireland, on the renewal of their charter, lent three millions to the public, at the rate of 5 per cent. (which was the utmost they could get from private individuals), having, at that period, all the balances of the public money in their hands. They certainly improved on the example that had been set them by the bank of England. Parliament, in the present period of distress, ought to look to the money which was absolutely within their grasp; they ought not to go to expensive or uncertain sources for assistance, but should take a portion of that which belonged to them, and not suffer the country to lie at the mercy of any chartered company. The right hon. baronet expressed a high respect for the directors of the bank, but deprecated their being involved in any political transactions with government. Such connexions had, in former times, occasioned the ruin of states. He alluded particularly to Genoa, when it was a free state, and the bank of St. George. In consequence of that species of political connexion, which he protested against, the proceedings of the Genoese government were, in time, absolutely overawed by the intrigues of that bank. It had been said, that the bank of England always steered clear of politics. This statement was not correct. He could show, by a reference to documents, that it was not founded in fact. But he would only refer to one circumstance, to bear him out in this assertion. That was granted, by the bank, to the administration of 1807 and 1808, which was refused to that of 1806. Why was it refused? Because that administration was not palatable to the directors of the bank; because those who took the lead in it, expressed a firm determination to make available those resources which the bank enjoyed, and of which the public were unjustly deprived. The right hon. baronet as a farther proof of the existence of a strong political bias, on the part of the directors of the bank, against the administration of 1806, stated, that when the latter proposed to them, on a certain occasion, the interchange of Irish for English securities, offering, at the same time, ample indemnity from loss, they refused to comply with the request.

Mr. *S. Thornton* did not deny the right of parliament to investigate the transactions that took place between the public and the bank, which must, however, always originate with the executive government. He never knew the directors of the bank to have behaved more favourably to one administration than to another. As to their refusal of the interchange of English and Irish securities, if the same proposition were made now, the bank would act as they had before done. With respect to the public balances in their hands, the question was much misrepresented. The bank said to the public, " Your balances are available to us, to such an extent, and we are willing to give you a compensation. If, however, you think this is too little, take your balances, and make the most of them."

Lord *Castlereagh* said, the gentlemen opposite had founded their argument on a wrong basis, when they supposed because a bargain was made between government and the bank—that bargain, too, being submitted to the House—the House had no opportunity of altering it. Those who knew the nature of such bargains must be aware, that they could alone be carried into effect by parliament. The right hon. baronet argued, that, because a committee had formerly made arrangements of a useful nature, therefere all transactions of this kind should originate in a committee. But did that committee deliver any opinion as to the course which should be adopted by government in its transactions with the bank? No such thing; it merely stated what advantages might be derived from certain balances which the bank then held. It did not point out what terms were to be demanded from the bank—it did not interfere with those negociations, on the part of the public, which only belonged to the executive department of the government. The argument of the right hon. baronet would go to this, that the preliminary functions, formerly exercised in those cases by the executive, should be intrusted to a committee of that House. Now, he recollected, when the right hon. baronet was on the committee of Irish finance, he would not agree to certain propositions that were made in it, because, he conceived, they interfered with the province of the executive government. " In the House of Commons," said he, " I will be ready to express my opinion on those measures, but I will not, in this committee, remove from government any part of the responsibility that attaches to them." As to the charge of the bank having been more favourable to one administration than another, he did not think there was any foundation for it. He was not surprised, when the directors were called on to give bank of England notes for bank of Ireland notes—to interchange the currency of the two countries—that they refused to do that which would be the means of mixing two systems essentially different.

Sir *John Newport* explained. The proposition to which he alluded, was not one for exchanging the notes of the two countries; it was to give facility to the public securities, by transferring them at the bank of England. With respect to the committee on Irish finance, he certainly, in that committee, had refused his sanction to some propositions which went to take out of the hands of government certain transactions connected with the currency of the country, and which bore no resemblance to the matter under discussion.

Mr. *Baring* regretted to hear his friends accuse the directors of the bank of any political partiality in their transactions with administration. As one of their number he utterly disclaimed the slightest knowledge of such partiality. He would not sit one hour in the direction, did he suppose them capable of such infamous conduct. They discharged their duty to the public in an honest, candid manner, from motives of the most disinterested nature. Every transaction which they carried on with the executive government was open to the scrutiny of parliament. The directors spurned the idea of doing any thing in the dark; as they well knew, and indeed every man in the country knew, that the transactions of administration with the bank were liable to the examination, and even to the control of parliament. It was unmanly to assign as a reason for drawing these balances out of the bank at present, that the state of the country was such as absolutely to require the people being released from taxation. A motive of such a nature should never operate with ministers. If they could show the country in a satisfactory manner that there were balances in the bank due to the country, let them at all times draw these balances, and not assign as a reason that the country was in a distressed state. Attachment to the interests of the country should at all times be the motive of their conduct, and not merely when the country was in an agitated state. But how did matters stand at present? Why, we were told that there were millions, many millions in the bank belonging to the country. But of such millions he must, for one, say he had no idea. The bank, in procuring their charter, had paid liberally for it. It was a fair and equitable bargain between them and ministers. The great point in dispute, as to the public cash in the hands of the bank, referred, he believed, to those balances of which they became possessed after the ratification of their former charter, in consequence of an act of parliament that provided for the placing in the bank of England certain balances of public money that had previously been confided to private hands. Now, the only question was, whether sufficient compensation was made for them? The hon. gentleman had stated them at about five millions; and he would ask, what could the public expect these great bankers to allow for this sum? Of this deposit, they had lent three millions without any interest, and advanced the remainder at four per cent. No person, therefore, could think that the bank had made an outrageous bargain. He most conscientiously said, as a bank director, and a representative of the people, he saw no disadvantageous bargain on the part of the public, but it was one to which the bank would not have been entitled, except for other circumstances which ought not then to be taken into consideration. He would again repeat he saw no bad bargain between the various chancellors of the exchequer and the directors, and he was sorry that accounts of what the bank possessed had been so very much exaggerated. The statements given had no doubt been very plausible, but he cautioned the House to beware of such plausibilities, as dangerous in the extreme.

Mr. *Hammersley* contended, that it ill became the House to interfere with the private profits of the bank, as in fact they had no right to do so. If a bargain was made in a legal constitutional manner, and as legally adhered to by the contracting parties, let not the House usurp authority where they have none. He considered such wanton attacks as were made on the directors, to be pregnant with dangerous consequences to the country. The bank had rendered the most essential services to the nation in the late war, from which the country had happily emerged, and in those services they had conducted their business in a proper manner; equally honourable to themselves and the country. At present men of large and independent fortunes filled the direction, but if they were liable to such animadversions, they would probably retire, and second-rate proprietors would come in, who would be more liable to the control of government, and more anxious to serve their own private interests. The hon. gentleman said, it was a great mistake to consider the bank a public establishment; it was absolutely a private company, whose profits were private, and therefore sacred. The present arrangement was denominated an agreement, but it should be more properly called a positive gratuity. He was perfectly satisfied that the bank had done every thing for the public, and that the loan was negociated on terms the most favourable to the country.

Mr. *Swan* conceived, that the bank stock proprietors had acted with great liberality, in making so large a loan at four per cent., and did not think there was any ground for an inquiry into their profits.

Mr. *Marryat* said, the question was, whether a sufficient allowance had been made to the public for the large balances which the bank directors had in their hands. With respect to profits on the capital, he begged to state the manner in which business was transacted by private bankers. The daily receipts and payments in this metropolis amounted to about 4,700,000*l.*; but there was a clearing-house in the city, at which the bankers' clerks assembled, and upon exchanging draughts, the money actually paid did not exceed 250,000*l.* It was not the object of the inquiry to throw any discredit on the bank; but it was an inquiry which ought to be instituted. He was somewhat struck with the observations of the hon. gentleman who spoke last but one, that in consequence of the repeated attacks made on the directors, they might be induced to resign their office! Had any report of their intention to do so ever been heard of? And even were such an event to take place, was parliament to be told that this was an argument sufficiently powerful to prevent them from examining than nineteen dividends paid upon the small capital of 200*l.* adding that the bank considered that a very hard bargain which had been concluded.

Mr. *Swan* stated his conviction, that the combined influence of the directors and of government could not have induced the bank to advance the sum to which the bill referred at 2 per cent. it being the general impression of the proprietors that 5 per cent. ought to have obtained upon this loan.

Mr. *Bankes* proposed to fill up the blank with 3 per cent. instead of 4, but the proposition was negatived without a division.

The House resumed, and the report was ordered to be brought up to-morrow.

Mr. Grenfell then with the permission of the House, proposed his resolutions, for the purpose of having them put upon the Journals; upon each of which, excepting the last, which was withdrawn, the previous question was put and carried.

MR. MELLISH'S RESOLUTIONS RESPECTING THE BANK OF ENGLAND.] Mr. Mellish then, with the leave of the House moved the following Resolutions:

1. " That by the act of 31 George 3rd, cap. 33, there was allowed to the bank of England, for the management of the public debt, 450*l.* per million on the capital stock transferrable at the bank, amounting, in the year ending 5th July, 1792, to 98,803*l.* 12*s.* 5*d.* on about 219,596,000*l.* then so transferrable; and that by the act 48 George 3rd, cap. 4, the said allowance was reduced to the rate of 340*l.* per million on all sums not exceeding 600 millions, and to 300*l.* per million on all sums exceeding that amount, whereby the bank was entitled in the year ending 5th April, 1815, to the sum of 241,971*l.* 4*s.* 2¼*d.* on about 726,570,700*l.* capital stock, and 798*l.* 3*s.* 7*d.* on 2,347,588*l.* 3*l.* per cents. tranferred for life annuities, being an increase of 143,965*l.* 15*s.* 4¼*d.* for management, and an increase of about 509,322,000*l.* capital stock: also, the bank was allowed 1,000*l.* for taking in contributions, amounting to 812,500*l.* on a lottery in the year ending 5th July, 1792; and 38,798*l.* 19*s.* 2*d.* for taking in contributions, amounting to 46,585,533*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* on loans and lotteries in the year ending 5th April, 1815.

2. " That it appears that the bank, in pursuance of the act 46 Geo. 3rd, cap. 65, has, from the year 1806 to the present time, made the assessments of the duty on profits arising from property on the proprietors of the whole of the funded debt, transferrable at the bank of England, and has deducted the said duty from each of the several dividend warrants, which in one year, ending 5th April, 1815, amounted in number to 565,600; and that this part of the business has been done without any expense to, or charge on, the public:

" That in pursuance of the above-mentioned act, the duties so deducted have from time to time been placed to the " account of the commissioners of the treasury, on account of the said duties," together with other sums received from the public by virtue of the said act: part of this money is applied to the payment of certificates of allowances, and the remainder is paid into the exchequer:

" That by virtue of the said act, the lords commissioners of the treasury have made annual allowances, at the rate of 1250*l.* per million, upon the amount so placed to the account of the commissioners of the treasury at the bank of England, as a compensation for receiving, paying, and accounting for the same; which allowances, however, have not in any one year exceeded the sum of 3,480*l.*, and upon an average of eight years, have amounted annually to 3,154*l.* only:

" The amount of duties received for the year ending 5th April, 1814, was 2,784,343*l.* which, if it had been collected in the usual manner, at an allowance of 5*d.* per £. would have cost the public 58,007*l.*; and the cost for collecting 20,188,293*l.* being the whole of the duty received from 1806 to 1814, on which allowances have been made, would at the same rate have amounted to 420,589*l.*:

" That all monies received by the bank on account of duties on property are paid into the Exchequer immediately after the receipt thereof: when this circumstance is contrasted with the ordinary progress of monies into the exchequer, the advantage resulting to the public may be fairly estimated at 2*l.* per cent. which, on the amount of duties for the year ending 5th April, 1814, would be 55,686*l.*, and on the total amount from 1806 to 1814, would be 403,765*l.*

3. " That the total amount of bank notes and bank post bills in circulation in the years 1795 and 1796 (the latter being the year previous to the restriction on cash payments), and in the year 1814, was as follows:

1795, Feb. 1, 12,735,520*l.* and Aug. 1, 11,214,000*l.*

1796, Feb. 1, 10,784,740*l.* and Aug. 1, 9,856,110*l.*
1814, Feb. 1, 25,154,950*l.* and Aug. 1, 28,802,450*l.*

4. "That at present, and during many years past, both before and since the renewal of the charter of the bank, considerable sums of the public money have been deposited with, or otherwise placed in the custody of, the governor and company of the bank of England, who act in this respect as the banker of the public, the average balances of these deposits: both before and after the renewal of the charter, were as follows:

	£.
"Public balances on an average of one year ending the 15th January, 1800 - - -	1,724,747
"Unclaimed dividends for the average of one year ending 1st January, 1800 - - - -	837,966
	£.2,562,713
"Public balances on an average of eight years, from 1807 to 1815 - - - - - -	4,375,405
"Unclaimed dividends, Do.	634,614
	£.5,010,019

5. "That it appears, from a report ordered to be printed 10th August, 1807, from the committee on public expenditure of the united kingdom, that the aggregate amount of balances and deposits of public money in the bank of England, including bank notes deposited in the exchequer, made up in four different periods of the quarter ending 5th January, 1807, fluctuated between the sums of 11,461,200*l.* and 12,198,236*l.*; or excluding bank notes deposited at the exchequer, the amount fluctuated between 8,178,536*l.* and 9,948,400*l.*; the reason for which exclusion is not obvious, as by the act of 48 George 3rd, cap. 3, the tellers of the exchequer are authorized to take as securities on monies lodged, either exchequer bills, or notes of the governor and company of the bank of England. And it also appears, according to accounts laid before this House in the present session of parliament, that the aggregate amount of such deposits, together with the exchequer bills and bank notes deposited in the chests of the four tellers of the exchequer, was, on an average, in the year 1814, 11,966,371*l.* including bank notes deposited at the exchequer, amounting to 642,264*l.* 11,324,107*l.*, excluding bank notes deposited at the exchequer.

6. "That it appears, according to accounts before this House, that the average of the aggregate amount of balances of public money in the hands of the bank of England, from February 1807 to February 1815, was 5,010,019*l.*; and that the average of bills and bank notes deposited in the chests of the four tellers of the exchequer, from August 1807 to April 1815, was 5,968,793*l.*; making together 10,978,812*l.* being 850,906*l.* less than the average of the said accounts for one year, ending 5th January 1807, as stated in the report of the committee on the public expenditure.

7. "That, by the 39 and 40 Geo. 3rd, cap. 28, extending the charter of the bank for 21 years, the bank advanced to the public 3,000,000*l.* for six years, without interest, and extended the loan of 11,686,800 for 21 years at an interest of 3*l.* per cent. per annum, as a consideration for the privileges, profits, emoluments, benefits, and advantages, granted to the bank by such extension of its charter:

	£.
"That the interest of 3,000,000*l.* for six years, at 5*l.* per cent. per annum, is - - - - -	900,000
"That the difference between 3*l.* per cent. and 5*l.* per cent. on 11,686,800*l.* is 233,736*l.* which in 21 years amounts to	4,908,456
"That the above loan of 3,000,000*l.* was continued to the public from 1806, when it became payable, until 1814, at an interest of 3*l.* per cent. making an advantage in favour of the public of 2*l.* per cent. or 60,000*l.* per annum, which in eight years and eight months amounts to - - - - - -	520,000
"That, in 1808, the bank advanced to the public 3,000,000*l.* without interest, which by an act of the present session is to remain without interest until the 5th of April 1816; the interest on this advance, at 5*l.* per cent. will for eight years amount to - - - - - -	1,200,000

8. "That, by the 39 and 40 Geo. 3rd, cap. 28, sec. 13, it is enacted, that, during the continuance of the charter, the bank shall enjoy all privileges, profits, emoluments, benefits, and advantages whatsoever, which they now possess and enjoy by virtue of any employment by or on behalf of the public:

"That, previously to such renewal of their charter, the bank was employed as the public banker, in keeping the cash of all the principal departments in the receipt of the public revenue, and in issuing and conducting the public expenditure:

	£.
“ That the average amount of the public balances in the hands of the bank, between the 1st February 1814, and the 15th January 1815, upon accounts opened at the bank previously to the renewal of the charter on the 28th March 1800, was - - - - - - -	4,337,025
“ Unclaimed dividends, for the average of one year ending 1st January 1815 - - - - -	779,794
	5,116,819
“ That the average public balances in the hands of the bank during the same period, upon accounts opened at the bank between the 28th March 1800 and the 27th February 1808, was - - - - - - - - -	£. 370,018
“ That the average public balances in the hands of the bank during the same period, upon accounts opened at the bank subsequent to the 27th Feb. 1808, was - - - - - -	261,162

The previous question being put upon each of the said resolutions, was agreed to.

Insolvent Debtors.] Mr. *Lockhart* rose, in pursuance of his notice, to call the attention of the House to the necessity of materially altering, if not of entirely repealing, the provisions of the act last passed for the relief of insolvent debtors. He was fully aware of the unpleasantness of the task which he had undertaken, but he considered that the general call which had been made upon the House from all parts of the country, upon this subject, imposed an imperious duty upon him to bring before the House the consideration of the law as it stood, with a view to remedying the great and immense detriment which arose out of its provisions to all ranks of the public, but more especially to those concerned in trade.—It was known that this law was originally introduced by the noble person (lord Redesdale) by whom it had been framed as a measure of experiment, and all accorded in the hope that it would have produced a better result than it had. As, however, it was now found to be attended by consequences of a grievous and lamentable description, it became expedient to reconsider its enactments. It was not necessary for him, in adverting to this topic, to enter into the question, whether imprisonment for debt was originally allowed by the common law of the land or not; it was sufficient for him that the practice had prevailed for five hundred years, and had, during that period, undergone various regulations and modifications by the legislature: neither was it necessary for him to submit any arguments as to the propriety of the judgments of our courts of law being enforced by some certain punishment—as that was a principle which at this day, few, if any, would be disposed to dispute. In considering this law, he would offer a few simple propositions to the House. The first was, that in every civilized country there ought to exist laws for compelling the performance of promises—next, that means ought to exist for enforcing the fulfilment of duties—and lastly, that a power should exist, by which any wrong done might be redressed. It appeared but reasonable, where a judgment was given by a court of law, that a mode should subsist, whereby that judgment could be enforced, and that where duties were violated, or wrongs done, such a punishment should exist as would deter others from pursuing a similar course; and yet the operation of this law was such, as completely to abrogate and render nugatory all those fundamental principles of justice. To confirm this statement it was only necessary to inquire into the leading feature of the act. What was this? Why, that any person who had been in custody for the space of three months, for a debt however enormous, incurred in a manner however objectionable, might apply to the insolvent debtors' court for relief, and might obtain that relief, on the simple condition of giving up all his property. There were two objections to this: first, that it was at the option of the party whether he should appeal to the court for relief or not; and, next, that there were no means by which a debtor could be prevented from going into prison, and wasting the remainder of his property, to the detriment of his creditor. He was sorry to say, that since this law had been passed, more persons had been committed to custody than when the choice of compulsion was left with the creditor; and hence the reason that our gaols were fuller than ever. In fact, no creditor who was aware of the consequences of this act, would arrest a debtor, because he well knew he would thereby be deprived of all chance of payment. It was clear, that such a system must have the effect of putting into the mind of every person, whether well-principled or not, when he began to fail, a disposition to put off the evil day to the last, knowing that in the end he would be relieved, and thereby lead to the waste of that property which would otherwise be resigned to the hands of the creditor.—Another objection which existed was, that there was no discretion in this act as to who ought to be relieved—and whether the person seeking discharge was deserving of such an indulgence or not, was a matter of perfect indifference. It was true that there was a clause whereby any person wasting his effects in prison was liable to be detained for five years; but there was no description of the sort of waste which would subject him to this punishment. There was another clause, by which persons guilty of a breach of trust were rendered liable to imprisonment for ten years; so again with respect to persons obtaining property under false pretences. Such persons were liable to imprisonment for five years, unless relieved with the consent of the creditors—the question of fraud was so narrowed, however, that unless a man was proved to have committed an offence, amounting almost to felony, there was little chance of his discharge being successfully opposed. There was no clause by which a man assuming a false appearance, moving in respectable circles, supporting an equipage which gave the appearance of wealth, without possessing a single farthing of capital, and thereby inducing the tradesman to give him credit, without the chance of payment, was deprived of the benefit of the act; and yet, who would not say that this was precisely the man who ought not to be discharged? Another objection to the law was, that men guilty of every act of injustice might be relieved from all consequences by its provisions. Persons against whom judgment was given for slander, false imprisonment, and all this species of torts or offences were exonerated by this act, and after an imprisonment of three months, were excused, and the same in all judgments given on actions for injuries from negligence, actions of trover, and trespasses, attended by circumstances however aggravated. In actions of covenant, too, where the defendant broke an engagement, however solemn, he was entitled to the same indulgence. Hence in this country, where justice was proverbially said to have taken her seat, there was no law which could control the performance of a covenant. It was said by Mr. Burke, that there was no connexion between the gaol and the counting house. The petitions which had been laid upon the table of the House, however, fully proved the fallacy of this reasoning, and that there was the strongest connexion between the one and the other. It was evident, in fact, that unless some modification took place in this law, there would be an end of the trade of this country altogether. The remedy which he should suggest for those evils was this—that the present commissioners of the insolvent court should be prevented from receiving any further petitions, and from discharging any more insolvent debtors. By this means the system would be got rid of for the present, and the legislature would have an opportunity of framing such a measure as was consistent with the security of the creditor and the relief of the honest man, while the dishonest man would be subject to a punishment adequate to the extent of his misconduct. The measure ought to be discussed with discrimination, and in a manner calculated to give satisfaction to all just minds. The general idea he had was, that a discretion should be granted to the judge to whom the applications for relief were to be made, who would thereby have an opportunity of determining whether a man had acted justly or unjustly towards his creditor. He was aware that there might be some objections to placing so large a discretion in a single individual—he thought, therefore, that a bench of judges should be appointed, to whom these subjects should be referred. As it was not his wish that those persons who were already in confinement should have to complain of any unexpected harshness or severity from the operation of this act, he should propose that its provisions should not apply to any person who was in custody at the time of its enactment. There was one other topic to which he wished to advert, and that was the expediency of throwing impediments in the way of the relief of debtors, at a time when the general distresses of the country was so great. He was convinced, however, that so far from this act aggravating the public distress, it would, on the contrary, be productive of the best consequences, by reviving the confidence between man and man, and rendering mankind, by the re-establishment of credit, the more anxious to relieve their fellow-subjects. The hon. and learned gentleman concluded by moving, "That leave be given to bring in a bill to suspend the power of his majesty's commissioner of the court of insolvent debtors to receive petitions for the discharge of insolvents."

Sir *Samuel Romilly* observed, that the object of the motion was, by suspending the act, to repeal it. Unquestionably the introduction of the bill would draw attention to the way in which the act had been executed; and the subject deserved serious consideration. There could be no doubt that great frauds had been committed, and that the legislature was loudly called upon to interpose. But it would not be wise for the House precipitately to repeal this act without considerable inquiry, and availing themselves of all the information they could procure on the subject, in order to frame some more effectual measure. Let the House recollect what was the state of the law before this act passed. It was the unlimited imprisonment of debtors; for a discharge was a release from the debt; so that a creditor was often left with hardly any choice, after taking the debtor in execution. In the former proceedings on this subject, we had, every two or three years, for a long time past, an insolvent act open to all abuses, and, by the gross scandal of violating all contracts between debtor and creditor by an *ex post facto* law setting the debtor at large. Would it not more become the dignity of parliament, and the interests of the public, to appoint a committee which might make every proper inquiry, and might examine debtors and other parties, as well as professional persons, whose experience would enable them to suggest eligible modes for the security of payment, and to remove oppressive measures peculiar to England, where alone there was nothing like a *cessio bonorum*, or something in the nature of a bankruptcy, for the relief of insolvents in prison. It appeared to him that the measure had not been adapted to the desired end; but this did not seem to arise from its being impossible so to frame it. He had nothing to do with framing the act; he was never consulted about it, and never saw it till it came into the House. He had only opposed some alterations in it which were proposed; and he believed that nobody in the House was against the act altogether. It should be remembered, that it was only a temporary act; but it ought not to be repealed without inquiry. The hon. and learned gentleman had suggested some remedies. He (sir S. Romilly) thought it might be rendered more beneficial. The creditor should have the power to compel the debtor to give up his property. He wished the hon. and learned gentleman would consent to a committee, to put the House in possession of useful information. Much valuable information might be obtained from the commissioner of the insolvent court: but the old mode of an *ex post facto* law was bad.

The *Attorney General* was fully aware of the great imperfections of this measure, and agreed in the propriety of the suggestion of his hon. and learned friend, who he hoped would move for the committee forthwith. He should be most happy to lend his aid in furthering the investigation alluded to.

Sir *Samuel Romilly* said, that his only reason for not making the motion, was the fact of his professional duties being likely to prevent his attendance.

The *Attorney General* said, he had the same apology to offer for not moving for the committee. He would, however, consult with his hon. and learned friend between that day and to-morrow.

Mr. *Brougham* hoped his hon. and learned friend, the mover of this question, would agree to the suggestion for the appointment of a committee. The question was one of vital importance, and unless some means were taken to remedy the evils which existed under this act, it would go to cut up trade and credit by the roots.

Mr. *Lockhart* did not feel it necessary to withdraw his motion, because he thought the same inquiry might be made under the bill as in the committee. He thought it was necessary to give some pledge to the public that the bill, as it existed, should be repealed; but if his motion were carried, he would undertake not to press it until the information desired was obtained.

Mr. *Abercrombie* was not satisfied that a bill should be introduced to repeal the law altogether, to the principle of which he still adhered, though he thought it required modification: he thought it would ultimately be best to adopt an amendment, that a committee be appointed, and in the mean time he should move that the debate on the question, be adjourned till to-morrow.

Sir *Charles Pole* spoke of the great grievances which had existed under the present bill, and urged the necessity of its being materially amended.

Mr. *Protheroe* thought that the trading interest were particularly indebted to Mr. Lockhart and wished for a total repeal of the act. If the committee proposed to take up the whole subject of the laws of debtor and creditor fully and fairly, the House would certainly be highly obliged to them; but if the object was to inquire concerning facts which were well known, the delay would prove injurious. The hon. member adverted to some gross cases of fraud since the act existed.

Lord *Castlereagh* did not see the necessity of adjourning the debate, neither did he conceive the introduction of the bill would be any obstacle to inquiry. It was not usual to oppose the introduction of a bill, unless there was some insurmountable objection to the principle of it.

Mr. Abercrombie having withdrawn his amendment, leave was given to bring in the bill.

Sir *Samuel Romilly* then moved, " That a select committee be appointed to inquire into the effects which have been produced by the acts 53 Geo. 3d, c. 102, and 54 Geo. 3d, c. 23, for the relief of insolvent debtors in England; and to report their observations thereupon to the House."

Mr. *Lockhart* observed, that he could not concur in the motion of the hon. and learned gentleman. If an idea once got abroad, that the House held a doubt on the propriety of the course which they ought to pursue, they would be only giving reins to a continuance of that system of fraud which now called for legislative interposition.

The House divided: Yeas, 82; Noes, 71. A committee was accordingly appointed.

Irish Elections.] Mr. *D. Browne* moved for leave to bring in a bill to limit the duration of polls at elections in Ireland. The hon. member, in allusion to what had fallen from an hon. general (Matthew), by whom this motion was on a former night interrupted, begged to say, that no man in that House was more favourable than he was to the independence of the elective franchise, and to the purity of election.

Mr. *Prittie* had no objection to the general features of the bill.

Sir *F. Flood* said, that although he had some strong objections to the measure, he would not, in the first instance, give it his opposition, but reserve himself for a future opportunity.

Sir *John Newport* said, that the bill declared the existence of great evils from the duration of polls in Ireland. He had himself felt those evils, both in his person and purse, by the length of an election contest, which, though the voters were not more than 1,000 in number, had lasted for a considerable time. But in the introduction of a measure of this kind, he was afraid that if strong guards were not introduced, an election, instead of being the freemens', would be the sheriffs' appointment. It would be certainly well to prevent the protraction of those proceedings, but it was equally important to secure to the constituent body the safe means of returning the man of their choice. If they did not secure the rights of voters in this manner, the necessary consequence would be, that elections would be thrown into the hands of government, and then it would be out of the power of any individual to cope, in point of expense, with so formidable an antagonist. The House would therefore take care that in whatever measure it enacted, the purity of election should not be violated, or the interests of the electors exposed to any improper restrictions.

Mr. *Vesey Fitzgerald* said, that the House was at present unapprised of the precise nature of his hon. friend's bill. It was most desirable to prevent a protraction of elections, and to counteract as far as possible the calamitous expense which was incurred on such occasions. When the bill was brought in, the necessary information of its details would doubtless be laid before them.

Mr. *Blake* rose not only to confirm the statement of the right hon. baronet, but to mention that, in his own election, much greater waste of time and abuse existed than that stated by the right hon. baronet. The law of elections in Ireland, with respect to which the bill proposed by the hon. gentleman was so extremely important, he was well aware was a subject which would be approached by the House with every view of attention, with every degree of examination and of caution;

and he was sure that the hon. member, if permitted to introduce his bill, would not press it with any rapidity through its different stages, but would give every opportunity for investigation and discussion. It was a subject of too grave and serious a nature, not to be viewed in all its bearings before the House proceeded to legislate; for great and crying as the existing evils were, they were so much interwoven and incorporated with the good, that an undigested attempt to diminish the one, would have the effect of lessening the other. Under this impression, he would support the introduction of the bill; and he hoped, that under proper arrangement, the principle of it would be made satisfactory to the House. Of this he was quite sure, that the personal experience of the hon. member who had undertaken to introduce it, would enable him to furnish much valuable material for the construction of such a law as was now proposed. Towards the conclusion of the last session, the hon. member, with a view to the introduction of the present bill, had moved for and obtained a return of the registered freeholders of Ireland. He held in his hand a paper, which since the present session had been laid on the table of the House and printed, and which purported to be a return such as was ordered. He was sure the hon. member would easily observe, that it did not contain a full and sufficient return, such as was ordered, and if otherwise, the hon. member would be proceeding himself, and inducing the House to proceed, on false and erroneous premises; but he submitted, there was another and a paramount reason for noticing the subject, as it was necessary that the House should see that its orders were not rendered nugatory and void by the private management and contrivance of any man, or of any set of men. He did not go the length of asserting that such was the fact in the present instance, but when the House recollected the vain and impotent attempt, at the last general election, to stifle and trample upon the constitutional freehold voice of that part of the united kingdom which he had the honour to represent, it would remark the strange coincidence with respect to the omission of that part only with which he stood thus connected. He would not go the length of asserting that it was a wilful default; he hoped it was not; but if it should turn out to be otherwise, he was sure the guilty individuals would be speedily taught to lament their indiscretion, and others would be deterred by the example which would be made of them, from trifling with the pleasure, or interposing themselves between the orders of the House of Commons, and the immediate and submissive execution of them.

Mr. *D. Browne* said, that after the bill was introduced, he had no objection to allow ample time for its consideration before he proceeded through its stages.

Lord *Castlereagh* concurred in the propriety of allowing sufficient time for the consideration of a measure, the principle of which was of so important a nature. He had himself had sufficient personal experience in early life, of the duration of election contests in Ireland; for he had been a candidate on one occasion, when the contest lasted from the 1st of May, until the 24th July. As great doubt was entertained in Ireland, whether the returning officer was not bound to close the poll at a certain period, it was certainly right to make some provision on this point.

Mr. *Preston* approved of the principle of the bill.

Mr. *Tierney* did not think the introduction of a bill would be the best and most speedy method of correcting the abuses complained of in Irish elections, and suggested the propriety of a committee to inquire into the general state of elections in Ireland, and how far the laws respecting them might be assimilated to those in England.

Mr. *Vesey Fitzgerald* observed, that though he concurred in the suggestion of the right hon. gentleman, as to the efficiency of a committee, yet he did not think it was a reason why the present bill should be objected to. The provisions of the bill were not yet known to the House, and it would be premature to judge of them. At the same time, if this bill were carried into a law, it would still be competent to any gentleman to move for a committee on the general subject.

Mr. *Tierney* repeated, that he did not object to the bill, but merely doubted whether, at first view it could embrace a settled system.

Mr. *D. Browne* said, he would give full time for the consideration of this subject. He did not mean to move for the second reading until the 29th of April next.

Leave was given to bring in the bill.

HELLESTON ELECTION BILL.] Mr. Swan moved for leave to bring in a bill to prevent corrupt and illegal practices, and securing the purity of election in the borough of Helleston.

Mr. *Preston* spoke highly of the disposition of the Helleston electors to guard themselves from any imputation of acting from an improper motive in future. He saw no reason for beginning the work of disfranchisement with this borough, for he did not believe there was a borough in Cornwall which had any better pretensions to the favour of the House. If it was proposed to commence an entire reform amongst the Cornish boroughs, he should be ready to lend his most cordial concurrence and assistance.

Mr. *Swan* believed that the hon. gentleman was entirely misinformed with respect to the actual state of the elective franchise in Helleston. As to the general character of Cornish boroughs, he begged leave to say, that he himself represented a borough where there were not merely 12, but 350 electors. The bill itself was founded on the report of a committee of that House, by which report it appeared that the power of returning a member for Helleston was in the hands of an attorney, the town-clerk, and two aldermen. He was himself in no way interested in the fate of the bill, and had brought it forward for no other reason, than that he had been nominee of that committee which made a special report upon the subject.

Leave was given to bring in the bill.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Friday, March 15.

Lord Mayor's Court.] Earl *Stanhope* said, that he had several petitions to present upon a subject of the utmost importance; and he therefore requested their lordships particular attention. It related to the proceedings of certain attornies and others in the Lord Mayor's court, who had refused to grant or to serve subpœnas for the petitioner, when he had a suit depending in that court. What was a subpœna? It was an order for witnesses to attend, to give evidence in the court; and if subpœnas were refused, a man might thereby lose his estate. It was literally shutting up the courts of justice; and nothing could be more dangerous and flagitious. The petitioner was a harmless man, of that harmless sect called Quakers; and their lordships would hear the details of his case when the petitions came to be read. Having a suit in that court, and having an attorney of his own, the petitioner, Mr. Waters, was advised by another attorney of that court—for there were but four of them, which was a monstrous grievance—he was advised by that other attorney, that his own attorney had put in a wrong plea. He therefore remonstrated with his own attorney, and demanded his bill of costs, which was contrary to an act of parliament of the 2nd of George 2nd, cap. 23, sec. 23. The attorney refused to deliver in his bill signed; saying, that if he were not paid, he would not serve his subpœnas. Then he, (the Quaker) went to another attorney, and that attorney likewise said, that if he did not pay the other attorney's bill without signature, he would have nothing to do with the cause, and would not serve the subpœnas. This was the subject of the second petition. Then he went to the officer of the court, whose name appears to the subpœnas, who informed him, that though his name was affixed to the subpœnas, it was not his business to grant them. He then went to the deputy, who refused to grant him the subpœnas: and this was the subject of the third petition. Lastly, he applied to a counsel, who told him that unless he employed an attorney, he would not be his counsel. Was it fitting that a British subject should be placed in such a situation? Supposing him to be one of those, which, however, this petitioner was not, who could not plead their own cause in open court, what could he have done? The noble earl said, he had made it a rule, when petitions were offered to him to be presented, not to present any to their lordships' House, where the party might have his remedy by action at law; and it was upon that ground that he had refused Butt's petition, which had been offered to him for presentation to their lordships. A noble marquis, however, had afterwards presented it; and in his opinion that petition was properly disposed of. This, however, was a case of quite a different description; and resembled in principle the case of the gaoler of Glocester castle, who had prohibited letters from being brought in, or carried out of the gaol, even in the case of debtors; and had forbidden their having any communication with their legal advisers. Their lordships would consider what must be the situation of a man confined within the four walls of a house, without being permitted to communicate with his friends or legal advisers. Petitions against this gaoler had been presented and received. He did not at present see in his place the secretary of state for the home department: but he would always do that noble person justice, whether present or absent; for he had proceeded in the most constitutional manner with regard to the case in question, and taken care that the proper remedy should be applied, which had induced him not to trouble their lordships any further upon that subject. This was a case of the same description, and he thought the petitioner had properly divided his case into these distinct petitions. His lordship then moved that the first petition be read.

The *Lord Chancellor* requested, as he had done when Butt's petition was presented, that the debate upon the question of receiving the petition should be postponed till their lordships had an opportunity of looking into it, and ascertaining whether it was proper to be received or not. Their lordships had, at his suggestion, adopted that course in the former case; and upon inspection it was found, that the petition could not be received; and the House, he believed, had universally concurred in his opinion to that effect. With respect to the persons concerning whom these petitions were offered, he was not acquainted even with the name of any one of them, except that of Mr. Shelton; and with regard to him, he could take upon himself to say that he was as respectable a man as ever lived. If subpœnas had been refused, the court itself might have taken cognizance thereof in the first instance: and, on affidavit of the fact, would postpone the trial, apply the proper remedy, and even punish the officers; he agreed, however, that if a public mischief was done, or for the purpose of preventing public mischief from being done, a petition might be received by their lordships; but if it was merely a matter in which a subject might have his remedy by action at law, then their lordships would be doing a great deal of mischief in receiving petitions in the first instance, when the party might have his remedy in a court of law, and the subject come afterwards before their lordships upon appeal. For these reasons, he should propose that the debate on the question whether the petitions be received, should be postponed till Monday.

Earl *Stanhope* said, there could be no objection, at any rate, to the petitions being now read; to which the lord chancellor replied, that there certainly could not.

On the clerk beginning to read the title, "To the upper House of Parliament, denominated the lords spiritual and temporal in parliament assembled,"

The *Lord Chancellor* asked the noble earl, whether he thought that a description of the House which entitled the petition to be received?

Earl *Stanhope* defended the phrase, contending that the term Upper House of Parliament, was the same used in the commissions issued for notifying the royal assent to bills.

The Marquis of *Buckingham* thought the petition was clearly informal, and recommended his noble friend to withdraw it.

The *Lord Chancellor* said, the House would observe that the petition only styled them the House of Lords by courtesy.

Lord *Holland* thought this not exactly correct, the word "denominated" being used.

The *Lord Chancellor* moved that the petition, the reading of which had been begun, should be rejected.

Earl *Stanhope* could not see with what consistency the noble and learned lord could be so averse to the receiving of this petition, for the word "denominated" might be left out, and then the address would be, "to the upper House of Parliament," which was the mode of denominating that House in the royal commissions, to which he affixed the great seal. He had a commission there, and was ready to quote chapter and verse against him. Nay, even in their own standing orders they called themselves the upper House of Parliament. Still, however, if their lordships were of opinion that the petition ought to be withdrawn, he must submit.

The petition was accordingly withdrawn, and the others were not presented.

Prize Money to the Army—French Contributions, &c.] The Earl of *Rosslyn* wished to ask a question of the noble lords opposite, the answer to which might tend to shorten the debate. It had been understood, that out of the contributions to be paid by France, the Prince Regent had been pleased to appropriate 25,000,000 francs (something more than 1,000,000*l.* sterling) as prize-money to the officers and soldiers engaged in the battle of Waterloo. He wished to ask, whether this sum was to be paid to them by instalments, in proportion as the contributions from France were from time to time received, or whether it was to be paid altogether in one payment, out of whatever portion of those contributions might first be received?

Earl *Bathurst* said, it was not intended to pay this money to the officers and men by instalments, an arrangement which would have rendered it of little value to them, but it had been determined to pay it at one payment on the 18th of June, 1817.

The Earl of *Rosslyn* expressed himself satisfied with the explanation; to pay the prize money by instalments, would have been undoubtedly a very unsatisfactory arrangement, which he did not believe could possibly be resorted to; but he wished to ascertain the point with certainty. He now understood that this prize money was to be paid altogether in the course of next year. He was desirous of putting another question, namely, whether the interest and sinking fund of the Russian loan in Holland, amounting to 25,000,000 of Dutch florins, which we had undertaken to pay, was to be paid out of the contributions from France, or was to form a separate and special charge?

The Earl of *Liverpool* said, the interest and sinking fund of that loan were not to be charged upon the contributions from France.

Petitions against the Property Tax.] Lord *Holland*, on presenting a petition against the Property Tax from the inhabitants of the ward of Cornhill, said, he was instructed to assure their lordships that many of those who had signed this petition, had always supported the government (meaning the ministers) throughout the late wars, and had not objected to the tax while the war continued. He could not represent their having constantly supported the ministers as any great commendation; but it did at least show that even those who had approved of the tax in time of war were adverse to it when peace was restored.

The Duke of *Sussex* stated, that he had three petitions to present, all of which he wished to be read before he submitted to their lordships the few observations to which he would solicit their attention. The first petition was from the merchants, bankers, and traders of the metropolis, and was signed by 17,000 persons. This petition went merely to the property tax, which it deprecated as a most objectionable impost in time of peace. The other petitions were not only against the income tax, but against the great military establishments, to which the petitioners objected as unconstitutional in themselves, and also as adding unnecessarily to the weight of taxation under which the country at this time so severely suffered. One of these petitions was from the ward of Farringdon-without, in the city of London, and the other from the ward of Langbourn, in the same city. The petitions having been presented and read, his royal highness observed, that as the first petition related to the property tax merely, while the other two went not only to the property tax, but also to the great military establishments intended to be maintained in time of peace, he would, with their lordships' permission, make a few observations on these subjects, following the order of the petitions. With respect to the first petition, then, which went merely to the property tax, he could not help saying, that considering the importance of the subject to which it related, and the number and respectability of the persons by whom it was signed, he felt not a little proud of the distinction of having been chosen to present it to their lordships. The petitioners were the merchants and bankers of London, who, in 1792, came forward to sustain the cause of the country; and again at the time of the mutiny; who also in 1798 came forward in support of the government, in consequence of which the income tax was first imposed. Now, however, when the objects of the war had been obtained, and the period of peace had arrived, they deprecated the continuation of an impost, which was only justified by the exigencies of a time of war. This would serve to show that the spirit in which the continuation of the tax was opposed, was very different indeed from what it had been sometimes said out of doors to be. He had heard with astonishment and horror, rumours spread abroad that this was a conspiracy of the rich against the poor, and the object of the rich was to procure, as far as they could, an exemption for themselves at the expense of the poor. These rumours and assertions bore a striking resemblance to the arts by which the flame of revolution had been kindled in France. There were two words in the English language not unlike in sound, but widely distinct in meaning. The words to which he alluded were dissatisfaction and disaffection.

It was from dissatisfaction at the projected renewal of the income tax, that these petitions came up to parliament from all parts of the country. But in this there was no disaffection. The petitioners represented, in the strongest terms, their objections to this tax, which they considered as an insufferable grievance in time of peace, and called upon parliament and the government to keep faith with them, as they had always been made to believe that this tax was to cease with the war. If these representations should be disregarded, and no attention paid to the dissatisfaction of the petitioners, then, and not till then, dissatisfaction might perhaps become disaffection. In looking at the difficulties and distresses of the country, the vast amount of the national debt, and the prodigious expenditure which must attend the payment of the interest, coupled with the support of a large military establishment, he could not help thinking that this was matter for the most serious reflection, and that every practicable means ought to be resorted to, to alleviate the burthens of the people, particularly by keeping the military establishment upon that low scale which the two last petitions called for. With respect to the national debt, he found that in 1700 its amount was 10 millions. In 1714 the amount of the national debt was 30 millions, and at that period a standing army in time of peace was first introduced. When the measure was then under discussion in another place, an hon. member had observed, that if the thing were once begun, it would become permanent. It might be said of this tax too, that if the imposition were once begun in time of peace, it would soon be converted into a permanent source of revenue. In 1750 the debt had increased to sixty millions, and the military force was 18,000. In 1762, the national debt had increased to 80 millions; and in 1784, after the American war, it had swelled to the enormous amount of 240 millions. In 1800 it had increased to 400 millions. In 1815 it was 700 millions; and now it had risen to the prodigious amount of 830 millions. When in the space of a century, then, the debt had increased so alarmingly, it was surely high time to consider the consequences of such unmeasured profusion of the public expenditure. It had been said by a noble lord on a former occasion, that the question of the property tax was distinct from the question as to the military establishment. It had been well answered, however, by a noble friend of his, that the questions were closely connected. If a large military establishment was absolutely necessary, the expense of it must be provided for in some way or other; but if it was not absolutely necessary, certainly this was not the time at which the country ought to be called upon to support it. It was in vain for us to attempt to rival the continental powers in the extent of our military establishment. We had at some periods of the late war certainly been enabled to collect very considerable armies, but that was in a great measure owing to our having so many troops in the numerous colonies which came into our possession. He mentioned this merely to show that our military force was in a great measure artificial. The Spaniards, if they had not given us all the support in the Peninsula which they might have given, were at any rate not against us, and by this means, too, we were enabled to bring a greater force into the field. He stated this because he felt, that whatever efforts we made to keep up a large military force, it would, after all, when compared with the establishments of the great military powers on the continent, be but as a drop in the ocean. Then, what was the use of the army which we kept in France? If it was to protect the government of France, the notions which the army might imbibe in France was, perhaps, a ground of reasonable apprehension. The French revolution had been thought by many to have originated from the notions which the French troops had imbibed in America, when sent there to act against this country. And here he requested their lordships' attention to a statement made by a noble lord on a late occasion, who referred to the Barrier treaty, as an instance where foreign powers interfered in our own domestic concerns. But how did they interfere? For the purpose of securing the Crown of these realms in the protestant line, in conformity with the general wish of the people, and in opposition to the intrigues of the king of France, who was attempting to impose the Stuarts upon this country, upon the principle of legitimacy; not that legitimacy which a noble friend of his had alluded to the other night—a legitimacy consistent with the interests of the public and the plan of a free constitution—but of legitimacy of birth merely. His objection to keeping up so large a British force in France was much strengthened, when he considered the great difference of expense between maintaining there a force purely British, and keeping a force composed of foreign troops. The foreign troops might have been procured for that service at 11*l.* 2*s.* per man, and this would unquestionably have been much more economical than raising an armed force here, and sending it to France.

The petitions were ordered to lie on the table.

MILITARY ESTABLISHMENTS OF THE COUNTRY.] The order of the day having been read,

The Marquis of *Lansdowne* said, he was glad the petitions presented by the illustrious duke had been laid before the House, previous to his addressing their lordships, inasmuch as the petitions of the people, connecting, as they did, the public expenditure and the burthens required to meet it, showed how greatly they needed the reduction of the one, in order that the other might be lessened. In going through the different items of the military estimates which had been laid before the House, it would be his object to point out to their lordships the excessive expenditure which they must necessarily incur, and to show in what instances they might be reduced. It was the more important for their lordships deeply and maturely to consider this subject, with a view to relieve the burthens of the people, in order that they might redeem the pledge they had laid at the foot of the throne at the commencement of the session, to resort to every practicable expedient of economy; a pledge which, he regretted to say, no instance had yet been brought forward, nor any statement made to show, that they had advanced one step in redeeming. In going through this detail, he protested against the supposition, that in proving the estimates now before the House to be improper and excessive, he was bound to produce others more consistent with economy. To this task he felt himself utterly unable, nor, he was satisfied, was there any noble lord in the House who could undertake that task without the aid of official information. But though no noble lord could undertake to show what estimates ought to be provided, instead of those now before the House, it was perfectly competent to their lordships to declare the present estimates extravagant and excessive, and to call upon the government to review them, and prepare others more consistent with that economy which our present situation and resources demanded. With this view it would be necessary for him to compare the present with former estimates, and indeed this was the only practicable way in which they could be considered, drawing in aid of that consideration the experience and wisdom of former times. That this had been the practice upon former occasions was proved by the conduct of a right hon. gentleman, whose authority the noble lords opposite would scarcely dispute, he meant Mr. Pitt, who in 1786, had a committee appointed for the purpose of considering what would be the proper estimates for the then peace establishment, taking as a ground for their decision, the estimates at the peace of 1763; thus showing, that the comparison with former estimates, and the experience of former times, formed the only practical grounds on which questions of this nature could be determined. He meant, therefore, to institute this comparison, for the purpose of showing to their lordships that the present estimates were utterly inconsistent with that economy to which the House stood pledged; with that economy which the people loudly demanded, and which they were entitled to expect, as the means of relieving them, of a part at least, of those burthens which now pressed so heavily upon them, and the pressure of which, undoubtedly, ought not to be continued one moment longer than the actual necessity of the crisis required. He should avoid exposing himself to an observation made before, that all references to money were unfair, in consequence of the great changes that had taken place in its value. It was satisfactory to him to find, that the noble lords opposite were at length aware of those changes, after all they had urged, upon other occasions, to the contrary. Avoiding, however, the reference to money, they must have recourse to some other standard of comparison; and he should adopt that of numbers, which could not vary.

Before he proceeded to go through the numbers of the present establishment, and their application in the several colonies and dependencies of the empire, he begged not to be understood as including the 30,000 troops which were kept up on the continent. Upon this subject their lordships had already expressed their opinion. By the treaties which had been laid on the table and which had been sanctioned by their lordships' approbation, the country was bound to keep up those troops for the specified time; but he should just refer to this establishment, and only for the purpose of reminding their lordships that it was kept up to support the balance of power in Europe. This was the argument on which the necessity of the force was grounded. It was said that this large establishment would be sufficient to preserve the balance of power, and he hoped, therefore, that no argument, drawn from the necessity of supporting this balance, would now be urged to sanction any other portion of the estimates, or to enlarge the establishment at home. The country had now a force on the continent greater than that which had been demanded by that great master in politics, king William 3rd. This prince, who had been so often accused of too much interference in foreign politics, and whose great object had been to preserve the balance of power in Europe, had, after the peace of Ryswick in 1697, when the power of Louis 14th was still so great, only demanded of his parliament, to support the balance of power in Europe, a force of 24,000 men. But the parliament had refused this, and were only disposed to grant him 7000. We had, then, at the present moment a force greater by 6000 men, than that which had been thought sufficient by William 3rd to support the European balance. The noble marquis said, that all he claimed for this reference was, that the support of the balance of power should not be urged as a ground for increasing our force at home.

In considering the subject of the estimates, he wished to call the attention of their lordships to them under three heads. The first was the force which should be deemed necessary for the defence of our colonies and possessions abroad. The second, the force which was to be kept up at home; and the third, which rose out of the other two, was, as to the nature of the troops which should be selected for each particular service, which had in view the economy with which such service might be efficiently performed. In looking to our dependencies abroad he should first call the attention of their lordships to our establishments in the East Indies, and he was the more anxious to do this, as it was a part of the public service which had been passed over in a singular manner by those who had examined the question. This omission had arisen, in his opinion, from an idea, that because government was bound by the charter to the East India Company, to keep up 20,000 troops, it was therefore not a subject of inquiry. But in his view of the question, this charter should by no means preclude an inquiry as to the necessity for keeping up so large an establishment there, because, in referring to the charter, he could show to their lordships that the board of control had only a power of maintaining 20,000 troops. This was the *maximum*, and it must have had a reference to a time of war, for it could not be supposed that in the duration of the charter twenty years, such a state would have been left out of consideration. This, then, was the utmost which the board of control had power to support, even with reference to a state of war. But would it be said that this force was necessary in time of peace? Would it be argued that this was the lowest force which should be kept up? Why, then, was the subject not a proper object of inquiry? Was it not proper to inquire why 20,000 troops, which had been granted with reference to a period of hostilities, should be continued, when those hostilities had ceased? But it was not 20,000 troops alone which were kept in the East Indies; there were, besides, a force of 3600 sepoys, and 4200 artillery, so that on the whole there might be said to be a force of nearly 28,000 men on foot in our Eastern possessions. He should not refer for the necessity of this force to the map of the East Indies, for the extent of our empire there was so great, that if all the troops which we could raise were sent out there, they would not be sufficient to garrison the several places; but he should refer them to a better criterion of the necessity of this force, and that was, the experience of former times. He called on their lordships to refer to any period of revolution in the East Indies, to any period of great and glorious exertion on the part of this country, and they would be surprised to find, that those revolutions had been suppressed, and those exertions successfully finished, with a force much less than that which was now intended to be kept up. He should first refer them to the campaigns of the marquis Cornwallis in the years 1791, 1792, and 1793, which had terminated so gloriously for this country. In all his wars, offensive and defensive—in those great exertions, which ended by the taking of Seringapatam, that gallant officer had only a force of 15,000 men; and even at that period the coast of Malabar and the Mahrattas were in hostility to us, and of course great fears might have been entertained from them. There was another period of exertion to which he wished to refer their lordships—the year 1799. In that war, which ended, after a great struggle by the conquest of the Mysore, a power which had been such an enemy to British interests, no greater force than 14,000 men had been thought necessary. At that time it was also to be recollected we had not the possession of Ceylon, for the defence of which a separate force of 3,000 men was now demanded. The Mahratta war had also been carried on and concluded with only a force of 13 or 14,000 men. He had called the attention of their lordships to these several periods, to show that the force now intended to be continued in our Eastern possessions was by no means necessary. He should consider them to be less so, when he recollected the other possessions which were now held, and in which it was intended to keep up large garrisons. We had Ceylon, the Cape, and the Mauritius, from which assistance might be obtained, not only for the purpose of repelling external danger, but for suppressing internal commotion. Even in those garrisons to which he had alluded, he thought the force intended to be kept up, more than was sufficient. One of them, the Cape, the Dutch had preserved with a force of 1600 men; and it was in the recollection of their lordships with what difficulty we had obtained it. But it might be said, that we had conquered that force, and taken possession of the Cape. If that were urged he would ask what it had cost us to take it, and under what circumstances the Dutch were when we took it from them? When this was recollected, he conceived the present force would be thought more than was necessary in that part of our possessions.

Having thus far endeavoured to show to their lordships, that the force proposed for our Eastern possessions was more than sufficient, he should next advert to our possessions in the Mediterranean, and first with regard to Gibraltar, the possession of which was so honourable for this country. The force at present proposed for that place was 4000 men. He should, as he stated in the commencement, compare this force with that which was kept up at former periods. In 1764 there were only 2,500 men in Gibraltar, and in 1766, the garrison was increased to 2,700 including officers. It was now to be recollected, that we had Malta, in which a large force was to be kept up. Why, then, was it necessary to keep up a stronger garrison now, than it had been when such reinforcements could not be so speedily sent to assist in case of attack? Many of their lordships were better judges of military affairs than he was, and of course better able to judge of the force which would be necessary for the defence of Gibraltar, but it was in the recollection of all their lordships, that the force now intended was greater than that kept up at any former period of peace. The most violent attack which could be dreaded on Gibraltar was from the Spanish lines, but those no longer existed. Their demolition had been insisted on, and followed the late negociations in Spain. Besides, Spain was not at present in a situation from which any attack could be dreaded. Why, then, was it necessary, to keep so large a force at present, when no external danger could be feared? He should next advert to Malta and the Ionian islands, for the forces of both were included in the same estimate. Of the seven thousand men which was proposed for these, he did not pretend to say how much was for Malta, and how much for the Ionian islands; but after deducting 4000, which might be thought sufficient for the former place, he should ask how were the remaining 3000 to be employed in the latter? We had not conquered the Ionian islands; we had not claimed them; but they had been put into our hands because there had been no other mode of providing for them. They had been put under our protection, not because we were a great military, but because we were a great naval power. The nature of the duty which we had contracted towards them was clearly expressed in the treaties which had been laid before their lordships. It was in language which though perhaps not very plain to the minister for foreign affairs, would be perfectly understood by a Russian, or a Polish, or an Ionian minister, as being rather a translation from their languages, than an original English composition. The nature of our obligation to the Ionian islands, as expressed by the treaty, was this—that " his Britannic majesty will employ a particular solicitude with regard to the legislation and the general administration of these states."* [Hear, hear!] He was certain that the noble minister for the country was bound to keep up those troops for the specified time; but he should just refer to this establishment, and only for the purpose of reminding their lordships that it was kept up to support the balance of power in Europe. This was the argument on which the necessity of the force was grounded. It was said that this large establishment would be sufficient to preserve the balance of power, and he hoped, therefore, that no argument, drawn from the necessity of supporting this balance, would now be urged to sanction any other portion of the estimates, or to enlarge the establishment at home. The country had now a force on the continent greater than that which had been demanded by that great master in politics, king William 3rd. This prince, who had been so often accused of too much interference in foreign politics, and whose great object had been to preserve the balance of power in Europe, had, after the peace of Ryswick in 1697, when the power of Louis 14th was still so great, only demanded of his parliament, to support the balance of power in Europe, a force of 24,000 men. But the parliament had refused this, and were only disposed to grant him 7000. We had, then, at the present moment a force greater by 6000 men, than that which had been thought sufficient by William 3rd to support the European balance. The noble marquis said, that all he claimed for this reference was, that the support of the balance of power should not be urged as a ground for increasing our force at home.

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Why, then, was the subject not a proper object of inquiry? Was it not proper to inquire why 20,000 troops, which had been granted with reference to a period of hostilities, should be continued, when those hostilities had ceased? But it was not 20,000 troops alone which were kept in the East Indies; there were, besides, a force of 3600 sepoys, and 4200 artillery, so that on the whole there might be said to be a force of nearly 28,000 men on foot in our Eastern possessions. He should not refer for the necessity of this force to the map of the East Indies, for the extent of our empire there was so great, that if all the troops which we could raise were sent out there, they would not be sufficient to garrison the several places; but he should refer them to a better criterion of the necessity of this force, and that was, the experience of former times. He called on their lordships to refer to any period of revolution in the East Indies, to any period of great and glorious exertion on the part of this country, and they would be surprised to find, that those revolutions had been suppressed, and those exertions successfully finished, with a force much less than that which was now intended to be kept up. He should first refer them to the campaigns of the marquis Cornwallis in the years 1791, 1792, and 1793, which had terminated so gloriously for this country. In all his wars, offensive and defensive—in those great exertions, which ended by the taking of Seringapatam, that gallant officer had only a force of 15,000 men; and even at that period the coast of Malabar and the Mahrattas were in hostility to us, and of course great fears might have been entertained from them. There was another period of exertion to which he wished to refer their lordships—the year 1799. 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Even in those garrisons to which he had alluded, he thought the force intended to be kept up, more than was sufficient. One of them, the Cape, the Dutch had preserved with a force of 1600 men; and it was in the recollection of their lordships with what difficulty we had obtained it. But it might be said, that we had conquered that force, and taken possession of the Cape. If that were urged he would ask what it had cost us to take it, and under what circumstances the Dutch were when we took it from them? When this was recollected, he conceived the present force would be thought more than was necessary in that part of our possessions.

Having thus far endeavoured to show to their lordships, that the force proposed for our Eastern possessions was more than sufficient, he should next advert to our possessions in the Mediterranean, and first with regard to Gibraltar, the possession of which was so honourable for this country. The force at present proposed for that place was 4000 men. He should, as he stated in the commencement, compare this force with that which was kept up at former periods. In 1764 there were only 2,500 men in Gibraltar, and in 1766, the garrison was increased to 2,700 including officers. It was now to be recollected, that we had Malta, in which a large force was to be kept up. Why, then, was it necessary to keep up a stronger garrison now, than it had been when such reinforcements could not be so speedily sent to assist in case of attack? Many of their lordships were better judges of military affairs than he was, and of course better able to judge of the force which would be necessary for the defence of Gibraltar, but it was in the recollection of all their lordships, that the force now intended was greater than that kept up at any former period of peace. The most violent attack which could be dreaded on Gibraltar was from the Spanish lines, but those no longer existed. Their demolition had been insisted on, and followed the late negociations in Spain. Besides, Spain was not at present in a situation from which any attack could be dreaded. Why, then, was it necessary, to keep so large a force at present, when no external danger could be feared? He should next advert to Malta and the Ionian islands, for the forces of both were included in the same estimate. Of the seven thousand men which was proposed for these, he did not pretend to say how much was for Malta, and how much for the Ionian islands; but after deducting 4000, which might be thought sufficient for the former place, he should ask how were the remaining 3000 to be employed in the latter? We had not conquered the Ionian islands; we had not claimed them; but they had been put into our hands because there had been no other mode of providing for them. They had been put under our protection, not because we were a great military, but because we were a great naval power. The nature of the duty which we had contracted towards them was clearly expressed in the treaties which had been laid before their lordships. It was in language which though perhaps not very plain to the minister for foreign affairs, would be perfectly understood by a Russian, or a Polish, or an Ionian minister, as being rather a translation from their languages, than an original English composition. The nature of our obligation to the Ionian islands, as expressed by the treaty, was this—that "his Britannic majesty will employ a particular solicitude with regard to the legislation and the general administration of these states."* [Hear, hear!] He was certain that the noble minister for recruits for our foreign service had been urged in support of this increase, but if the arguments which he had used against so large an establishment in our several colonies were of any value, they would go to the reduction of the home establishment; for the less force there was abroad the less demands would be necessary from home. In the West India islands particularly, from the destructive effect of the climate on the health of our troops, he contended that it would be politic to have a less number of men than was now kept up, for the greater this number the greater must be the mortality amongst them, and of course the more frequent demands for fresh supplies. The noble marquis then objected to the mode in which it was intended to employ some of the proposed military force. He observed, that the collection of the revenue, or its protection in the prevention of smuggling, would have an effect on the discipline of the troops not easy to be removed. But in whatever service the troops, particularly the cavalry, were to be employed, he should object to the kind of cavalry which was intended to be kept in such large force. He alluded to the heavy horse, and he begged it would be recollected, that these were the most expensive and least efficient of all kinds of cavalry. The number of these troops had been more than doubled since 1792. At that period they amounted to 785, and in the present year they were raised to 1744. This increase the noble marquis strongly objected to, first, as being unnecessary, and secondly, as being inefficient and extremely expensive. The proportion which these troops bore in point of expense to the light dragoons, was as 65 to 43, and when this difference was so great individually, how great must it not be in so large a number? Why, then, not select troops which would be more efficient and less expensive.

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* See the Treaty, Vol. 32, p. 296.

There was another point to which he wished to call the attention of their lordships, and that was the number of troops which were to be kept up as guards and garrisons. These he conceived were items of the public expenditure, which might be considerably reduced by a proper attention to economy. There were, as he understood, at the present moment, 26,000 men receiving pensions for services, over and above those who were disabled. Of so large a number he conceived that a force of 8 or 10,000 men might be selected for doing garrison duty, and thereby save the public much expense. The noble marquis complained that some corps of marines, which had arrived from America, had been disbanded, and suffered to enlist again, receiving a large bounty each man. This, he observed, was an expense which might well have been spared.—He next adverted to the staff of the army, which until he had seen the estimates he could not imagine to have arisen to such a height. He would compare it with that of former periods; and in doing this he could not be accused of any unfair inference arising from the different expenditure of different eras, because he would state what the proportionate expense of the staff was to that of the army at large. In 1764 the charge of the staff was 1-56th that of the army at large. In 1784 it was somewhat less than 1-100th. In 1786 it was about 1-100th. In 1792 it was 1-90th. In 1816, as appeared by the papers on their lordships' table, it was 1-17th. It thus appeared, that, in a country in which at all times the staff bore a greater proportion to the army at large than in any other country in Europe, the proportion had increased from 1-100th to 1-17th of the army! He willingly admitted, that additions had been made to the staff during the war, which were highly advantageous to the public service. But with the war those offices should terminate; and under the existing circumstances of the country nothing could justify the enormous proportion of staff which he had mentioned.

Having already detained their lordships so long, he felt that it would be extremely improper for him to trespass on their attention with any detailed remarks on the remaining subject of consideration—the ordnance, the barracks, and the commissariat departments. All he would say with respect to the first, was, that it was double the amount of the ordnance in 1792. On referring to the papers their lordships would find a considerable expense in every article under the head of 'contingencies.' To the necessity of these contingencies it would be impossible for him to object, without entering into the details, which he had already expressed his wish to avoid. He would, however, make this observation, that however necessary it might be to make provision for these contingencies in time of war, they ought to be very much limited in time of peace. A great portion of these expenses arose from the necessity to meet exigencies which could not exist in a time of peace. He allowed that the sum which might be saved in these items appeared trifling, when compared with the number of millions to which the estimates amounted; but he contended that it was only by a sedulous attention even to trifles, that a great reform could be accomplished in our expenditure. In no view of the question ought any item under the head of ordnance, or under any other head, be continued, when the cause in which it originated had ceased to exist. He would state one instance of the tendency to continue in peace, and when all alarm was no more, those precautions which were only necessary in a season of danger. This was the item of above 1400*l.* for maintaining a military communication across the Medway. He had inquired into the necessity of this communication, and he found that it had originated during the last war, when exaggerated apprehensions of invasion existed, and when this communication was created lest the enemy should come up the Medway and destroy Rochester bridge. Looking at the present state of Europe, and looking at our own military character, was it possible to contend that the continuation of such an expense was necessary? Another item consisted of a large sum for keeping up the martello towers. He would not detain the House with discussing whether or not the construction of these martello towers had been expedient. It was a subject of controversy among high military authorities. But at this time to go on with such a system of defence on the coast, appeared to him inexplicable. It tended materially to increase the expenditure: first, there had been the expense of building the towers, then there was the expense of repairing them, and lastly, there was the expense of the troops, by whom they were to be occupied. Would it not be more consistent with the character and the magnanimity of the country to abandon these places altogether, and to rely on the courage of the people for the defence of our shores? [Hear, hear!] With respect to the commissariat, he would only say, that the amount appeared to him to be very considerable, although he fairly confessed that the nature of the subject rendered it impossible for him to pursue the details. No comparison could be made with the expenses of former times for this department of the public service, the great utility of which he fully admitted, had grown out of recent occurrences. But on the question of barracks, their lordships and himself were better judges; and he was persuaded they would agree, that although barracks might be necessary in some parts of England, and in Ireland for the 25,000 troops to be maintained in that country; yet that the sum of 500,000*l.* appropriated merely to the repair of barracks was, on the face of it, a most extravagant proposition, and that it ought to be materially reduced. He really believed that first floors could be hired for the troops on more reasonable terms. Many of the charges in these estimates, which appeared to be too large, he would not detain their lordships by noticing. Such were the items of the staff corps and the waggon drivers; in both of which, great reductions might no doubt be made. But, although in times of difficulty and pressure, like the present, the minutest savings ought not to be despised, yet it was not on such grounds that he submitted to their lordships the address which he should conclude with proposing. It was on the ground of the enormous increase of our military establishment, both in numbers and expense, compared, not with one, but with any peace establishment that could be selected from our whole history. He repeated that no peace establishment could be selected from our whole history that, if compared with that now recommended by his majesty's government, would not appear trifling and ridiculous, though at the time they were proposed, they were all the subjects of grave and serious consideration both in and out of parliament, with an earnest desire on the part of every statesman in the country to reduce them as low as was consistent with security. But now, on no better grounds than those he had described, it was proposed to extend the peace establishment, from 30,000 to 100,000 men; and that at a period when there was no cause for apprehension, when there was no powerful rival in existence, and when, in the event of any unexpected attack on our foreign possessions, the means of rendering assistance from some neighbouring colony were rendered so easy. The existence, in peace, of any army beyond that which was necessary for the purpose of security must be mischievous. It was not by maintaining any such army that this country had attained to the elevated station which it now held among the nations of Europe.

recruits for our foreign service had been urged in support of this increase, but if the arguments which he had used against so large an establishment in our several colonies were of any value, they would go to the reduction of the home establishment; for the less force there was abroad the less demands would be necessary from home. In the West India islands particularly, from the destructive effect of the climate on the health of our troops, he contended that it would be politic to have a less number of men than was now kept up, for the greater this number the greater must be the mortality amongst them, and of course the more frequent demands for fresh supplies. The noble marquis then objected to the mode in which it was intended to employ some of the proposed military force. He observed, that the collection of the revenue, or its protection in the prevention of smuggling, would have an effect on the discipline of the troops not easy to be removed. But in whatever service the troops, particularly the cavalry, were to be employed, he should object to the kind of cavalry which was intended to be kept in such large force. He alluded to the heavy horse, and he begged it would be recollected, that these were the most expensive and least efficient of all kinds of cavalry. The number of these troops had been more than doubled since 1792. At that period they amounted to 785, and in the present year they were raised to 1744. This increase the noble marquis strongly objected to, first, as being unnecessary, and secondly, as being inefficient and extremely expensive. The proportion which these troops bore in point of expense to the light dragoons, was as 65 to 43, and when this difference was so great individually, how great must it not be in so large a number? Why, then, not select troops which would be more efficient and less expensive.

There was another point to which he wished to call the attention of their lordships, and that was the number of troops which were to be kept up as guards and garrisons. These he conceived were items of the public expenditure, which might be considerably reduced by a proper attention to economy. There were, as he understood, at the present moment, 26,000 men receiving pensions for services, over and above those who were disabled. Of so large a number he conceived that a force of 8 or 10,000 men might be selected for doing garrison duty, and thereby save the public much expense. The noble marquis complained that some corps of marines, which had arrived from America, had been disbanded, and suffered to enlist again, receiving a large bounty each man. This, he observed, was an expense which might well have been spared.—He next adverted to the staff of the army, which until he had seen the estimates he could not imagine to have arisen to such a height. He would compare it with that of former periods; and in doing this he could not be accused of any unfair inference arising from the different expenditure of different eras, because he would state what the proportionate expense of the staff was to that of the army at large. In 1764 the charge of the staff was 1-56th that of the army at large. In 1784 it was somewhat less than 1-100th. In 1786 it was about 1-100th. In 1792 it was 1-90th. In 1816, as appeared by the papers on their lordships' table, it was 1-17th. It thus appeared, that, in a country in which at all times the staff bore a greater proportion to the army at large than in any other country in Europe, the proportion had increased from 1-100th to 1-17th of the army! He willingly admitted, that additions had been made to the staff during the war, which were highly advantageous to the public service. But with the war those offices should terminate; and under the existing circumstances of the country nothing could justify the enormous proportion of staff which he had mentioned.

Having already detained their lordships so long, he felt that it would be extremely improper for him to trespass on their attention with any detailed remarks on the remaining subject of consideration —the ordnance, the barracks, and the commissariat departments. All he would say with respect to the first, was, that it was double the amount of the ordnance in 1792. On referring to the papers their lordships would find a considerable expense in every article under the head of 'contingencies.' To the necessity of these contingencies it would be impossible for him to object, without entering into the details, which he had already expressed his wish to avoid. He would, however, make this observation, that however necessary it might be to make provision for these contingencies in time of war, they ought to be very much limited in time of peace. A great portion of these expenses arose from the necessity to meet exigencies which could not exist in a time of peace. He allowed that the sum which might be saved in these items appeared trifling, when compared with the number of millions to which the estimates amounted; but he contended that it was only by a sedulous attention even to trifles, that a great reform could be accomplished in our expenditure. In no view of the question ought any item under the head of ordnance, or under any other head, be continued, when the cause in which it originated had ceased to exist. He would state one instance of the tendency to continue in peace, and when all alarm was no more, those precautions which were only necessary in a season of danger. This was the item of above 1400*l.* for maintaining a military communication across the Medway. He had inquired into the necessity of this communication, and he found that it had originated during the last war, when exaggerated apprehensions of invasion existed, and when this communication was created lest the enemy should come up the Medway and destroy Rochester bridge. Looking at the present state of Europe, and looking at our own military character, was it possible to contend that the continuation of such an expense was necessary? Another item consisted of a large sum for keeping up the martello towers. He would not detain the House with discussing whether or not the construction of these martello towers had been expedient. It was a subject of controversy among high military authorities. But at this time to go on with such a system of defence on the coast, appeared to him inexplicable. It tended materially to increase the expenditure: first, there had been the expense of building the towers, then there was the expense of repairing them, and lastly, there was the expense of the troops, by whom they were to be occupied. Would it not be more consistent with the character and the magnanimity of the country to abandon these places altogether, and to rely on the courage of the people for the defence of our shores? [Hear, hear!] With respect to the commissariat, he would only say, that the amount appeared to him to be very considerable, although he fairly confessed that the nature of the subject rendered it impossible for him to pursue the details. No comparison could be made with the expenses of former times for this department of the public service, the great utility of which he fully admitted, had grown out of recent occurrences. But on the question of barracks, their lordships and himself were better judges; and he was persuaded they would agree, that although barracks might be necessary in some parts of England, and in Ireland for the 25,000 troops to be maintained in that country; yet that the sum of 500,000*l.* appropriated merely to the repair of barracks was, on the face of it, a most extravagant proposition, and that it ought to be materially reduced. He really believed that first floors could be hired for the troops on more reasonable terms. Many of the charges in these estimates, which appeared to be too large, he would not detain their lordships by noticing. Such were the items of the staff corps and the waggon drivers; in both of which, great reductions might no doubt be made. But, although in times of difficulty and pressure, like the present, the minutest savings ought not to be despised, yet it was not on such grounds that he submitted to their lordships the address which he should conclude with proposing. It was on the ground of the enormous increase of our military establishment, both in numbers and expense, compared, not with one, but with any peace establishment that could be selected from our whole history. He repeated that no peace establishment could be selected from our whole history that, if compared with that now recommended by his majesty's government, would not appear trifling and ridiculous, though at the time they were proposed, they were all the subjects of grave and serious consideration both in and out of parliament, with an earnest desire on the part of every statesman in the country to reduce them as low as was consistent with security. But now, on no better grounds than those he had described, it was proposed to extend the peace establishment, from 30,000 to 100,000 men; and that at a period when there was no cause for apprehension, when there was no powerful rival in existence, and when, in the event of any unexpected attack on our foreign possessions, the means of rendering assistance from some neighbouring colony were rendered so easy. The existence, in peace, of any army beyond that which was necessary for the purpose of security must be mischievous. It was not by maintaining any such army that this country had attained to the elevated station which it now held among the nations of Europe.

they consented to the wish of any one of the powers on this subject.

Having thus disposed of the six colonies that from subordinate had grown up to be principal, and the necessity for an additional force in which would strike every one, he would shortly go through the others. And first, with respect to North America generally. There was an increase in the estimate for North America, compared with the estimate of 1791 of 3,500 men. Unquestionably this was a considerable augmentation; but by what had it been occasioned? The strongest posture of defence in which a country could be placed against an invading enemy, was when it was surrounded by trackless forests, immense wastes, and the absence of all means of supporting a hostile army. Such was the state of our possessions in North America in 1791. Since that time the forests had been in a great measure cleared, communications had been made through the country, and various facilities afforded to an invading army; and in addition, the adjacent possessions of the United States, which in 1791 were covered with impenetrable forests, and which had no inhabitants but such as were hostile to the Americans, had made a still more rapid progress than ours had in cultivation, and the means of easy communication both by land and by water. The Americans possessed, therefore, increased means of invasion, and we diminished means of resistance. Under these circumstances, with the increased American population, and their increased military resources, could their lordships be surprised that a considerable reinforcement of our troops in that quarter should be thought necessary? The noble marquis talked of leaving North America to the defence of the population. Undoubtedly the militia of that country had fought most bravely; but it had always been found, that an admixture of regular force had given great energy to the exertions of the inhabitants. It should be considered also, that a long time must always elapse before reinforcements sent from this country could arrive. They must also be sent before the end of September, or they could not be sent until May. If, therefore, the intelligence of any occurrence requiring the presence of an additional force in North America should not reach this country until after August, government would be debarred from sending it for eight months. The whole of the force proposed in the estimates for both the Canadas, Nova Scotia, Cape Breton, and Prince Edward's Island, was 9,000 men; a number, that he was persuaded their lordships, under all the circumstances of the case, would not think was too great. He would now advert to Jamaica. In 1791, the number of troops in Jamaica was 1841. The number now proposed, was 3,500. By a resolution of the assembly in Jamaica, passed since 1791, they had agreed to maintain the troops at their own expense if they amounted to 3,000, but not if they were fewer. Of the necessity for such a force they were the best judges. He honestly owned, that men were apt sometimes to be unreasonable in their apprehensions and demands. But in this case, where the assembly persevered in desiring that large amount of force, the charge of which they took on themselves, and deprecated that small amount of force, the charge of which they would not take, it was not too much to assume that the former was absolutely necessary for the protection of the island. He would next proceed to the other West India islands, the estimate for which was 9,000 men; that of 1791 having been 3,800. There had, however, been a considerable increase in the number of those islands since 1791; the military stations, which were at that period six, being now twelve. The force in 1791 also consisted entirely of troops of the line. Of the 9,000 now proposed, only 3,000 were of the line, 2,000 were deserters, and the remaining 4,000 blacks. In which of these descriptions of troops could a reduction be advantageously made? In the troops of the line? In that case only one regiment of regular troops would be left for all the colonies. In the deserters? That would be to change the present comparatively mild system towards them for one much more severe. It was true that from time to time the punishment of exile was remitted to those who behaved well. But there was a wide difference between that and a general discharge, which would operate as a bonus on desertion. In the blacks? To reduce them would be as expensive as to keep them up, as they must be maintained elsewhere; and, on the constitutional view of the subject, it was hardly to be apprehended that the constitution could be overthrown by 4,000 blacks. He had thus accounted for the increase of troops, not only from the diminution of the number of garrisons, but from the change in the description of the force.

Having proceeded so far, he had now to establish the expediency of the estimates which related to the Cape of Good Hope, the Mauritius, and Ceylon. These colonies must be considered as tributary to India, and the troops there were always at the disposal of the governor general. It was not, therefore, advisable to reduce the force to so low a state, that whatever might be the exigency in India, no reinforcements could be spared to go thither. For Ceylon the estimate was 3000 men; of whom, in that climate, not more than 2,800 could be considered effective. This force was necessary at present, in consequence of there being no communication between Columbo and Trincomalee but by water, requiring two winds. A military road, however, was making, and when completed, which there were hopes it would be by the end of the year, a reduction of 1000 might be effected. In the Mauritius a large force was necessary. The population was numerous, and not well inclined to the British government. When, on lord Moira's application, a part of the troops were sent to India, their absence had nearly proved fatal to the colony, as a conspiracy took place under pretence of dissatisfaction with the registry bill, which, had it not been fortunately discovered, would have deprived us of that possession. The estimates for the Cape of Good Hope of 3000 men was indispensable. Of this number 7 or 800 effective men were necessarily detached into the country, to prevent the recurrence of incursions by the Caffres of the most alarming nature. The Cape also should be considered as a kind of depôt to which, on the sudden breaking out of any war in India, troops might be sent from this country.—He came now to the Mediterranean. The number proposed for Gibraltar, viz. 4000, was a fair average of the number that had been garrisoned there for several years before 1791. In 1785 the garrison was 3629; in 1786, 3700; in 1787, 3889; in 1788, 3889; in 1790, 4367; in 1791, 4100. Their lordships, therefore, could not consider the present proposition as excessive. In Malta, besides the ordinary fortifications and harbours, there was a constant demand for military, in consequence of a recent construction of a Lazaretto castle, highly prized in a commercial point of view, which required a great many troops.

The Ionian islands, to which he should next advert, were placed under the immediate protection of this country, and their military and fortresses were also given up to the command of the British. It was a principle well known, that where any danger was to be apprehended, the utmost vigilance in the appointment of guards should be exercised. It had been said by some of their lordships, that the people of these islands were at no expense in their defence, and took no share whatever in the money expended by our government. He was confident government would never ask them to do any such thing. If they did not remunerate us with money for the exertions we made in their behalf, we had at least the far more profitable advantage of their commerce; and when any of their lordships considered that this was a mercantile country, he was confident they would think the advantage we gained by this trading, as infinitely preferable to pecuniary reward. But laying aside all such mercenary motives, his lordship argued that, even on the bare reckoning of debtor and creditor, this country gained upwards of 800,000*l.* every year by them.

With respect to Ireland, he had listened with every possible attention to the arguments adduced by the noble lords on the opposite side, but without being at all moved. It had been asked, "Shall government go on from year to year in thus increasing the number of their forces?" He trusted they would not. He trusted they would soon be enabled, by the blessings of a consolidated peace, to reduce these to a proper peace establishment. But while the present distracted state of that country continued, it was absolutely requisite that a strong military force should be kept up. Besides, it was consonant to common feeling that troops in the exercise of duty in that country should be occasionally relieved. It was nothing more than bare justice to grant them some respite after such arduous service. At present he believed there were troops in that country who had not been relieved for fifteen, nay even for twenty years. Now he would ask their lordships, how it was possible for government to relieve these troops, unless they had an adequate number to supply their place? The demands made on government were really great, and it was impossible to supply these demands without a sufficient body of troops. A heavy complaint had been made against ministers for preserv-

What constitutes a state?
Not high rais'd battlement or labor'd mound,
Thick wall or moated gate,
No: men, high minded men.

Such had been the emphatic sentiment of a man, who, to the commanding genius of a true poet, had added the patient labour of a man of business. It was a sentiment applicable to all states. How much more applicable to the peculiar character and circumstances of this country! So applicable, indeed, was it, that the unvarying creed of all our great statesmen, transmitted from generation to generation, had been the inexpediency of maintaining a large military establishment in England in time of peace. It was the point on which whigs and tories had always united. Let not their lordships be told, that because the whigs of the reign of Anne and of the reign of William were sensible of the power of Louis 14th, they were insensible to the danger of a standing army. The only question between the statesmen of those days, was a question of degree; but all united in thinking a force infinitely limited, in comparison with that now proposed, the only force that in time of peace ought to be maintained. Let their lordships look at the arguments used on this subject by sir Robert Walpole, that great whig minister, though not romantic patriot; in the course of which he admitted that a larger standing army than 17 or 18,000 men in time of peace might be dangerous to the public liberties; and founded his proposition for that number on the hope of convincing his political adversaries, that from the limited number which he proposed no mischievous consequences could ensue. Let their lordships take one step at least towards the fulfilment of that duty of economy to which both parliament and the country were bound to attend; and with a view of limiting those establishments, which, however little those by whom they were proposed (and he accused no man of such an intention), contemplated them as the instruments of subverting public liberty, might lead to such designs in others, and might give to future wicked ministers the means of accomplishing that object. To avert that danger, and to discharge that most imperative of all duties, national economy; he called on their lordships to redeem the pledge which, on the first day of the session, they gave in their address to the throne. He called on them to take an effectual step—not to relieve the burthens of the country to the extent it was desired they should be relieved—but to relieve them to a certain extent; to set an example by a reduction of the military expenditure — a reduction in the other public departments—and a reform of that corruption which in some degree it was to be feared existed in all the branches of the public service. With these views the noble marquis submitted to the House a motion to the following effect:

"That an humble Address be presented to his royal highness the Prince Regent, thanking him for having been graciously pleased, in compliance with their lordships request, to order the military estimates to be laid before them.—That they observe with grief and concern, that the proposed military peace establishment so greatly exceeds what at any former period has been considered as adequate to the safety of the country, and as consistent with the principles of the constitution, at a time when no foreign danger exists, and when no just apprehension can be entertained for the public welfare, except from the amount of those burthens which obstruct all the channels of industry, and from which the people can be relieved only by a strict attention to national economy—That they humbly request therefore, that his royal highness will be graciously pleased to give directions, that such reductions may be made in the proposed estimates as may render them consistent with the real interests of the country, and conformable to the practice of our ancestors and the established principles of the constitution."

Earl *Bathurst*, while he admitted that any reduction, however inconsiderable, that could be made ought to be made, denied that even the reductions suggested by the noble marquis, if they were really practicable, could materially diminish the total expenditure. He was prepared, however, to show, that, consistently with a just view of the public service, no such reduction ought to be made. To the noble marquis's comparison of the present estimates with those of former periods, he had listened with great attention, and he confessed his surprise to find the noble marquis comparing one item with a similar item of one former establishment, and another item with a similar item of another former establishment; a mode of comparison suited to the convenience of the noble marquis's argument, rather than to a fair illustration of the question before them. For himself, he would also institute a comparison, but he would institute it between the whole of the proposed estimates and the whole of the estimates of a former period; that period should be 1791; and he would willingly admit, that where he could show no reason for any departure from the estimates of 1791, that departure was erroneous.

The first item of the proposed estimates related to the troops in France. On this subject the noble marquis having made a manly and candid avowal of the necessity of carrying the treaty of peace into effect, he need not say any thing. The next item was the military establishment in India. The noble marquis had assumed, that his majesty's government considered themselves bound, under all circumstances, to maintain 20,000 troops in India. That was not the case. To show that it was not the case, he would merely state that in 1814, after the charter was concluded, instructions were sent out by government to reduce the force in India to 16,000 men, and three or four regiments were actually on the point of returning, had not the Nepaul war broken out. At a time when not a year back the governor-general of India had demanded troops from the Cape of Good Hope and from Ceylon, in terms so strong that they could not be refused, and when we were by no means certain that the war in India was concluded, it would surely be thought premature by their lordships to reduce the force there; and this the more especially, as a noble marquis who had run so brilliant a career in India, on reviewing the conquests which the wisdom of his measures, the bravery of the troops, and the dispositions of his predecessor, lord Cornwallis, had enabled him to achieve, gave it as his opinion, that under no possible circumstances, even when we were at peace with France, and with all India, ought the regular army in that peninsula to be less than nineteen regiments. As far, therefore, as France and India went, he thought he had established the expediency of the proposed estimates.

He would now proceed to the other appropriations of our force. In 1791, 17,000 men were employed abroad, and 16,000 at home, making a total force of 33,000. In the proposed estimates 48,000 were to be employed abroad (exclusively of those which he had mentioned as being in France and India). Undoubtedly this was a great addition, but the cause was very explicable. We had now forty-three principal colonies, in all of which there was a greater or a less necessity for troops. Sixteen of these principal colonies had been altogether acquired since 1791, and six of them had grown into that rank from the same period. On these six which he had last mentioned, he would say a few words. The first was Upper Canada, which in 1791 was not a separate department. The second was Newfoundland, to prevent which from becoming a principal colony, the greatest efforts had been made previous to 1791. In the course of the war, however, it had been found impossible to prevent communication with this colony, and now, the number of inhabitants being 70,000, principally Irish, a military force became indispensable. The third colony that had become principal was Honduras, the population of which had so much increased as to require the presence of troops. The fourth was Sierra Leone, an entirely new creation, the object of which was moral rather than political; but which, with the coast of Africa, required a thousand men. The fifth was Botany Bay, the increased population of which since 1791, and the character of that population, rendered double the number of troops necessary now, that were necessary at that period. The sixth and last colony of that description was St. Helena. In 1791, St. Helena was garrisoned by the East India company. In consequence of the late arrangements it had been thought expedient to garrison it with 1,200 regular troops. With reference to the noble marquis's observation, in objection to this establishment, that the allies were at all times ready to throw the whole charge of any measure on this country, and that though we were at the expense of the establishment they had joint commissioners, he must say that on the last point the noble marquis was mistaken, for although the allies had commissioners in the island, who were entitled to give their opinion in certain cases that might arise, they had no right to interfere; and that with respect to the disposition of the allies to throw the whole burthen on this country, he confidently assured their lordships that there was not one of the allied powers which was not desirous of taking Buonaparté and maintaining him at its own expense. He was sure that there was not a noble lord who heard him that would not have thought his majesty's government had failed in their duty had ment to watch over and attend to the grants and concessions of his majesty's ministers. An argument urged in favour of an additional force was, that it had been rendered necessary by the increased number of our colonial possessions. This argument he could not admit; it was at variance with the policy on which he had acted—it was irreconcilable to the purposes for which those acquisitions were made. The argument assumed, that the new colonies were of no use in adding to the security of the old. It rested on a totally erroneous basis; for the induction ought to be directly the other way. But he would ask, where was the danger of their being attacked? Was it from the naval force of France, or of Holland; or was it from Spain? He apprehended no great alarm could have yet been excited by the growing navy of America; but it had been said, with regard to Jamaica in particular, that the neighbourhood of a negro state in St. Domingo was a source of just apprehension. It had not been considered in this light when St. Domingo was in a state of insurrection, and fit for every sanguinary effort; not even when, in 1802, that island was invaded by a French army of 40,000 men. No establishment equal to the present was then considered necessary for the complete security of Jamaica. If it was against the contagion of principles they wished to provide, was it supposed that a larger amount of garrison could achieve this object? The noble lord had stated, that the assembly of Jamaica had undertaken to pay for 3000 men. This, then, he felt himself justified in taking as the maximum, in their estimation, which the safety of the colony required. If, therefore, an additional force was asked for, it must depend on some special case, which it was for parliament to consider; but no statement that he had yet heard afforded the shadow of a pretence for it. It was for the house, so long as the question was before them in detail, to estimate the particular danger to which each of the different settlements was exposed; because it was that danger alone by which the amount of its military force ought to be measured, and then to compare this danger with the danger to ourselves at home, from a lavish and improvident expenditure. With respect to the amount, it should be recollected, that it was not limited to the numbers abroad, but that a large force must be maintained at home for the purpose of reliefs. In this view the question extended itself, and was brought home immediately to ourselves.

He wished not to enter into any general discussion upon the subject of our present system of colonial policy, or the real advantages derived from our numerous foreign possessions. His opinions on those questions would not, perhaps, correspond with the popular feeling, nor with the interests of a large class of his majesty's subjects. That discussion, therefore, he should not approach on the present occasion, but rather follow the noble lord to the Mediterranean. There he found, on touching at Gibraltar, that we had raised considerable works, in consequence of a former extension of the Spanish lines. These lines had now been destroyed, and yet it was deemed necessary still to keep a force in our own works, for no other reason, except that these works were in existence. He confessed he saw no limit to such a principle of military establishment. Malta, also, must be fully garrisoned—and why? Not on account of any apprehended attack, for there was not a breath of wind to waft a hostile fleet towards her shores, but for a different and singular reason, namely, that her fortifications were very strong. So, with respect to the Ionian islands, the argument was this—they were acquired in time of peace and by treaty. Corfu is extremely strong, and therefore they must have a large garrison, and Corfu must have a force in proportion to the strength of her position. In fact, let the place be strong, or let it be weak, let it be old or new, populous or the contrary—from all parts came converging arguments in favour of an increased establishment. Let the wind blow from what quarter it might, the vessel was sure to arrive at the same port. He now came to Canada; and here he hoped he should not be supposed to under-value the increased danger to our possessions there, from our mismanagement of the negociations for peace. There were, in the course of these negociations, some pretensions of Great Britain urged with monstrous imprudence, to say the least of them. What was the security which Canada would derive from an additional force of 4 or 5,000 men? He supposed that the faith of America was such as had been represented—that our security must rest on the solidity and good faith of the engagement between the two countries. But even if America were to entertain intentions at variance with this supposition, from the protection of the lakes, we had less cause for apprehension. When she invaded Canada, how did we repel her? If dangerous designs were apprehended from America, let us see how we then provided against her—let us see how we met her by the spirit of the very few British troops and militia at our disposal there. He would suppose, then, that we might rely, first, on the good faith of America, in the observance of the treaty between her and this country; secondly, on the natural protection of the lakes; and lastly, on our maritime power, by which we should always be enabled to convey assistance to Canada before any armies of the United States could penetrate any great way into that country.

Having said so much on the details of the question, he would now advert to a few points which he conceived of no small importance in the present discussion. He contended that there was no one point from the detail stated to them, on which it was possible for their lordships to concur with the noble lord in providing such a force in a time of peace. He had been at issue with the noble lord and his colleagues as to the question, whether or not they were starving the war in the Peninsula; and he had had no small difficulty in proving to them the practicability of what they afterwards accomplished so successfully to their own glory. He had then endeavoured to prove, that in our then pressure our best policy was to meet the difficulties by manly exertions, and by that determined fortitude which the nature of the contest demanded. But because he had brought forward an accusation against the noble lord and his colleagues of starving the war, and insisted on the beneficial effects which would result from a more liberal policy, and because they had found that policy successful even beyond their utmost expectations, they seemed to think that there was the same impolicy in starving the peace, and that the policy which was applicable to war was not less applicable to peace [Hear, hear!]. In war there was demanded a fortitude in submitting to burthens, an energy in availing ourselves of all possible resources. In this way alone could war be conducted in a manner glorious or honourable to a nation. But economy, approaching even to parsimony, was the panoply of peace [Hear, hear!]. And those who maintained that the safety and security of this country depended on our maintaining great armies in a period of peace, displayed an ignorance of the first principle of our constitution; and not only that, but an ignorance of the first principle of our insular policy. What was the first principle of our constitution? The jealousy of standing armies was the elementary principle of the constitution, the source of all our freedom; not merely a jealousy of standing armies without the consent of parliament, but of standing armies at all. The law contemplated no such thing as a constitutional soldiery, were the words of a great constitutional lawyer. The mutiny bill was a standing bulwark of the jealousy of the law of England of standing armies, and proved that even in war they were an object of incessant jealousy. This principle was not only that of our constitution, but it was deeply rooted in our insular policy. Let him not be suspected of maintaining that because this country was an island she would best consult her security, honour, and glory, by not looking abroad, and resting completly within herself. No such thing—but he thought this—that this country from her insular situation—from her peculiar sources of industry—from her naval dominion—from her freedom, and her many great and concentrated resources, which the whole world could not touch whilst she possessed the dominion of the sea, could in a period of peace apply herself to the increase of her means without danger, and remit altogether her exertions without ceasing to preserve her foreign influence. No; she had hitherto produced an influence both on the continent and on the whole habitable world—her influence had been felt from one extremity of the globe to the other; and she would best continue to maintain it by never ceasing to cultivate the advantages she derived from her insular situation, without forgetting to interfere in foreign affairs when her interest and her glory demanded such interference. He did not need to point out particular instances. Their lordships would see, that throughout our whole history, from the earliest periods down to the present time, our policy had always been to cultivate our internal resources—to spare the people—to cultivate that spirit from which we derived such distinguished advantages in time of war [Hear, hear!]. We could not keep up armies to vie with those of the powers of the continent; but in a time of war, if we cultivated our resources during peace, we might be sure of producing a sufficient army to carry the British arms into the heart of our alliances, and to infuse an energy into their armies, more in number indeed, but deficient in that spirit which our soldiers chiefly derived from the spirit of the British constitution. We should find that this policy had been followed by this country down to the time of Mr. Pitt, in 1793. What had been the policy of that great man? It had been said, indeed, that he repented him of this policy—that he made some confession to some one or other, that he repented the policy followed by him during the ten years, from 1783, down to 1793; and that this repentance induced him to regret the degree to which our armies had been reduced in his peace establishment; but the weakness of the English army at that time was, he would maintain, the true cause of the mighty efforts which we afterwards made, and of enabling us to fit out and maintain the most powerful armaments. Now, when we heard so much of the danger of reduced establishments in time of peace, he would ask, if it was merely to our army that we owed our success in time of war? What could be accomplished by the sword, if we had not also the command of the purse? Great as had been the successes of our navy, and of our army in a later period, still we could not have ultimately succeeded, had not we obtained assistance in what we were too weak to accomplish alone, from other powers in alliance with us. But let us look at the power of this country, from 1783, to 1793, when our establishments were so low. Were there no proofs then of our influence on the continent? In 1787, there was an instance of the influence of Great Britain on the continent, and of the wisdom of her councils, to which nothing either before or since was, in his opinion, superior. He alluded to the manner in which this country interfered in the case of Holland. Was it necessary for us to have then a great army? Was it necessary that we should have a great force for the purpose of influencing Europe? The result was then produced by the influence which we derived from our situation; and by a common feeling at that time entertained over the continent, that from having wisely cultivated our resources, we should be able, whenever the exigencies of the times demanded, to call those resources into instant activity.

He held these to be true constitutional principles. Every point required, in his opinion, the most rigorous investigation. The burthens which would fall on the people of this country, if they agreed to this establishment, would completely deprive them of the power of interfering hereafter with their former effort in the affairs of Europe, and strip them of the superiority which their insular situation gave them over other nations. The noble earl had said it was impossible to diminish this establishment, more than to an amount of 800,000*l.* [Here lord Bathurst said something across the table]. He was very happy to hear that a great deal could be taken off; but admitting the diminution could not be more than that sum; was such a diminution not a point of the utmost importance when we were threatened with such a dreadful taxation? The noble earl had stated, that if the establishment were diminished to the utmost possible extent, there would still be occasion for the property tax, at least for some tax, which should be equally productive; but he would not only say, that in proportion as we diminished our establishment, our taxation would be lowered; but he would also state, that this was a tax which ought not to be submitted to in peace, or in any other circumstances than the extreme pressure of war; a war menacing positive danger to the constitution and the country. There was a grand and fundamental objection to this taxation [Hear, hear!]. The grand principle to be aimed at in all taxation, was, that it should not touch the productive powers of capital; but this tax intercepted capital in its progress to production. The general object of all policy in peace was, to increase our resources; but the principle of this tax was directly opposite to the first principle on which we sought peace, namely, that we might obtain that repose which should enable us to make exertions when our exigencies demanded them. He would say nothing as to the inquisitorial nature of the tax. He never admitted that such a tax ought to be submitted to, for the sake of winding up the expenses of the war, or for the intermediate state between war and peace, according to the new vocabulary [Hear, hear!]. He said at once, that the tax was at variance with every principle of taxtion in peace. But the noble earl had said that this tax had no concern with the present question. It must have a concern with every question of expense. The noble lord had told them the other night, that the distress of the country was owing to the sudden cessation of a system created by the long and extensive war; that that long war produced an artificial state of things; that the monster made the means it fed on. True, it did in some degree make the means it fed on; but when the demand of the war was withdrawn, there was also withdrawn the materials of taxation, which were derived from the artificial scarcity produced by those demands. This, however, led again to the true source of the relief—a diminution of expenses, that we might be relieved from our burthens. It had also been said, that many proximate causes led to the distress under which we were labouring. But who would deny that the main cause arose from the artificial state into which the country was thrown by the war, and the withdrawing of that state on the return of peace? The noble earl had told them that the same distress existed at the termination of the American and former wars. But the distress arose then from the war, and not from the peace. There never before existed any war like the last, which, partly from its duration, and partly from its nature, created such an artificial state of things in the country, as to make the return of peace be considered as a calamity, and increased the difficulties of existing burthens, instead of effecting a relief from them. But they must look to their sole resource in such difficulties—a diminution of their establishments. The two great grounds on which ministers rested the claim for so large an establishment at home were first, the reserve necessary for the relief of the troops on foreign stations; and secondly, the great demand for troops for the suppression of smuggling, which required a great force to be always stationed on the coast. He had heard of many extensive schemes on that subject, and he did not know whether some of them had not been partly carried into execution. He had heard it stated, that not cavalry alone, but infantry also, were to be stationed along the whole coast. The noble earl had told them, that he knew of only one other way of suppressing smuggling, and that was the reduction of the import duties. He should think, however, that there was another—the due execution of the laws against smugglers. He understood that there was at present the greatest relaxation in the laws against smugglers, even after judgments of courts of law had been pronounced against them. A law had sometime ago passed, giving the treasury a discretionary power in executing sentences against smugglers; and he did believe that the treasury had exercised that power, not he would say, with an indulgence, but a laxity, which had in a great measure disarmed the law of its efficacy. When ministers, therefore, called on them for a great military force for the suppression of smuggling, he wanted first to know how the law had been executed? They were not now aiding the power of commissioners of excise and customs with a military power, but they were converting that military power, in fact, into revenue officers. They would have commissioned officers, knights of the bath, and knights commanders, searching houses, for the purpose of seizing silk handkerchiefs and ribbons. He should think this scarcely consistent with the honour of the army. When he said this, he did not mean that it was inconsistent with the honour of the army to aid occasionally the civil power; but this was converting them into downright revenue officers, for seven whole regiments of cavalry were to be converted into revenue officers. Every person who had had an opportunity of watching the execution of the revenue laws, knew that smuggling was a trade carried on by cunning and fraud against vigilance. But if the war against smugglers was to be carried on by force instead of vigilance—by stationing great bodies of troops along the coast, the frauds would elude them at every point. The noble earl opposite (Liverpool) would gain very few laurels by victories over contraband traders on the heights of Walmer, for the traders would take good care never to encounter him there [A laugh]. He would say, in the first place, that it was a monstrous evasion of the first principles of our constitution, to convert cavalry into revenue officers; and in the next place, that they would be found altogether unfit for the purpose for which they were intended.

With respect to the force for Ireland, he differed from almost every person whose opinion he had heard. Until he received from his majesty's ministers a clear exposition of the measures they had in contemplation for allaying the agitations, which from all quarters he knew to exist in that country—which had been so ably described by a noble friend of his whom he saw in his place, and so eloquently described in another House by the secretary for that country—(and here he admitted, that too much credit could not be given to the present lord lieutenant, for his honest, worthy, and upright administration)—until he heard that the force was to be accompanied by something like measures of a soothing and healing nature for that desolated and afflicted country, he could not vote for the establishment of such a force. The idea that the wounds of a country, distressed like Ireland, were to be healed by the oblivious antidote of an establishment of 25,000 troops, was what no man in his senses could entertain. But, said the noble earl, had there never been 25,000 men in Ireland before. Was there never a period when the force in that country was much greater? But this force was for the purpose of averting much greater evils, when dangers of all kinds, from rebellion and invasion, threatened that country. But the question now was this: we were now arrived at peace—God grant it might last!—we were now in a period of security—there was no danger now. No machinations of France could have any power in Ireland. No such things as machinations could be carried on in Ireland. Now, then, when we were commencing an era of peace, were we to vote 25,000 men as absolutely necessary for carrying on the ordinary purposes of government in Ireland, without inquiring farther into the views and purposes of that government? The noble earl had told them, that no law now existed there—that tythes, the very foundation of the church, was the subject of perpetual litigation. His noble friend had told them, that these evils had lasted a long time, and yet the noble lord chose to tell them the other night, that they ought not to inquire into them. And why? Because no man could put down the disturbances of that country with lenity. But he, for one, would give a negative to this proposed establishment for Ireland; and he would address the noble lord and his colleagues, in nearly the last words of a learned and eloquent lord in that House, addressed to a former ministry, during the commencement of the disturbances of America. "You send to America your commissioners with a sword in one hand, and laws sharper than the sword in the other." Until his majesty's ministers by an inquiry into the subject, showed the necessity of the measures which they had in view, and which required so large an establishment, he, for one, would not give his vote for it.

Upon the whole, the demand made by his majesty's ministers, seemed to him contrary to the principles of our constitution, contrary to our insular policy, contrary to the advantageous use of our resources; and, therefore, it could only be justified, if justified at all, on the general principle, which had not been stated that night, but had been stated before in the speech from the throne—that it was necessary for the maintenance of our station in Europe, that we should keep up a large force in time of peace. This principle, when examined, would be found at variance with the statement of the noble lord, who maintained that the whole was absolutely necessary, and that nothing was asked for this grand and general object which had been so loudly stated—the maintaining our high station in Europe. Overladen with laurels as we now were, it would not be denied, that there were periods when we filled as high a station in Europe as we did at the present period. In the reign of king William, and the end of the reign of queen Anne, it would hardly be denied that our station in Europe was as high as it was now—in some considerations it was higher. But to see what was necessary to maintain the high station which we now held, let us advert to the present state of Europe. Was it not evident, that the successes of the French, which enabled them to overrun Europe, were gained over military monarchs? Were not Russia and Austria military monarchies? Did not Prussia spring, armed as it were, from the head of her founder, Frederick the Great? With much labour we had long endeavoured, and at last accomplished, the revival of the three great military powers in question. And when we had accomplished our great object, the destruction of the great military despot of Europe, ministers then turned round upon us, and told us to arm against the power we had ourselves created. We had raised these three great powers to the highest point of military perfection, and it would require a corresponding force of our own, for the purpose of keeping them down. The noble earl (Bathurst) might shake his head, but that was the amount of his argument. Oh! but we were told of the great and dreadful danger to be apprehended from the prevalence of the military spirit in Europe. It seemed that the sound of drum and trumpet, and spirit-stirring fife, were rousing and nourishing such a military ardour, that some remedy became necessary. And what was the remedy proposed? An enormous military establishment. In order to check the growth of the military spirit abroad, it was proposed to have an immense standing army at home! In order to ensure the triumph of civil habits and civil liberty over military feelings and military despotism, it was gravely counselled to establish a permanent force of 150,000 armed men! Could any thing be more inconsistent and absurd! The old policy of the country—that policy, by adhering to which it had maintained its glory through ages, and had been enabled to achieve its present lofty character—that policy was now to be abandoned, and we were to encumber ourselves with an army in peace larger than we ever kept on foot even in war, for the strange purpose and view, as it appeared, of teaching a great moral lesson to Europe, that military establishments were extremely dangerous. What would our allies say to a doctrine of peace enforced with such warlike arguments? Would they not say, that the very arrangements lately made at congress formed of themselves a decided refutation of such maxims? What indeed was the inference from that speech which had been uttered by a noble lord on a former occasion—a speech more like that of a quarter-master-general than of a statesman, in which there had been so much said about frontiers and lines and positions and centres of attack and defence? Did not this mean (if it meant any thing), that the situation of the continental powers, with respect to each other, must necessarily be military? What, then, would the emperor of Austria say to our standing military lecture against military establishments? In answer to our mild, temperate remonstrance, presented in the shape of 150,000 men, would he not say, "If you have need of so large an army to check the military spirit, how can I do without an army, who have so large a territory, which can only be kept by military occupation? You have given me a Bavarian frontier and Italian states, but how am I to maintain them, except by powerful armies?" Would not the language of Russia and of Prussia be to the same effect? Would they not say to us, "before we reduce our establishments, do you reduce yours." And most justly would they make such reply, for nothing could be more ridiculous than our appeal to them to reduce their armies, when it had hitherto ever been considered as an axiom, that the circumstance of the three great powers of the continent being military monarchies, was absolutely essential to the safety of Europe. How could we apprehend any danger from them, either to each other or to ourselves, leagued together as they were by holy treaties, and sworn not even to lead their armies to battle, except in the pure spirit of christian charity [A laugh, and hear, hear!]? But even if there were any danger, could we avert it by our armies? Was any military force that we could raise able to strike them with terror? The only way in which we could inspire them with terror would be, by recurring to our old policy—by maintaining and cherishing those constitutional principles, and that free spirit, which were the true strength of the country, and had enabled us to effect such astonishing results.

In whatever way, then, he considered this question of the establishment, he could not but pronounce it as dangerous to the constitution. A noble lord, indeed, had said in that House that Justice was armed; and another person (a man of genius probably) had said, in another House, that Wisdom was armed. Why, then, he supposed it would be asked, should not peace be heavily armed too? It was a pity that gentlemen who made such pretty classical allusions should not understand the force of the metaphors which they had adopted. He apprehended that when these fabulous ladies were said metaphorically to be armed, it was meant that they were armed intrinsically, not externally. It was not intended that wisdom should go in uniform, or justice be accoutred cap-a-pie, with a spear in her hand, and ride on horseback! The less, indeed, that wisdom and justice had to do with armour, the better for the nation; for seldom would it be found that these qualities had much influence in armed states. But it seemed there was no danger, all our fears were visionary: the noble lord had told us, that though our troops should be so increased in number as to overspread the whole country, yet that no harm could arise which would not be checked by the power of the free press and of public opinion. Would it not, however, be better to attend in the first instance to the suggestions of this free press, to the remonstrance of this public opinion, and thus prevent the evil, instead of afterwards having recourse to these powers to check an evil already existing?. For his own part he would prefer this course to any reliance on the noble lord, notwithstanding his two boasted forces, and even notwithstanding his two new allies, justice and wisdom, though both should be in armour.

The noble marquis said, he could not conclude this protest against large military establishments, without bestowing his just tribute of praise on the army and its conductors. He had no hesitation in saying, and he did not see why the presence of the illustrious person (the duke of York) should prevent him from expressing his sincere opinion, that the successes of the late war were mainly attributable to the exertions of the illustrious individual at the head of the army, whose impartiality, and ardour for the improvement of the condition both of officers and soldiers, were, he believed, universally allowed; nor would he withhold his opinion that, to the illustrious person at the head of the government were also attributable, in a very eminent degree, not only the result of our operations, but the operations themselves. To him also might be ascribed many of our essential military improvements, concerning which, however, he would say no more, than that he firmly believed, that even as to dress, most of the alterations introduced had contributed to the comfort and convenience of the soldier; nor did he think that even the ridiculous fopperies of a part of the army would have excited so much disgust and contempt, but for the alarm entertained on account of an enormous standing army in time of peace.

Viscount *Sidmouth* said, he felt it incumbent upon him to offer some observations on the view taken by the last speaker of the military force proposed to be maintained for the present year, and some defence of that arrangement which had been arraigned by the noble marquis. He had listened to his noble friend with that attention which was due to every thing that came from him, and it was painful to his feelings to learn that no part of the conduct of his majesty's ministers had had the good fortune to meet with his approbation. The noble marquis had condemned the whole of those military establishments which, in the present state of Europe, the Prince Regent's ministers had thought it absolutely necessary to maintain, and must say he had thought his noble friend rather inconsistent with himself, when speaking on these establishments, and when expressing his sentiments on the peace. Although, while delivering his opinions on the last-mentioned subject, he had seen little reason to congratulate the country on the security they had gained, for all the sacrifices they had made—he, nevertheless, when speaking of the number of troops which it was proposed to keep up, had appeared to think the peace so amply secured, and all our colonies so perfectly safe, that a question might be raised, whether any military force whatever was necessary for their defence. That, it had been well said by his noble friend, was a relative token of the advantages we had gained. How far an extended military establishment might be consistent with the constitution of this country, or suitable to the state of our finances, were questions which might properly be brought into discussion; but he did not fear to oppose the inferences which had been drawn from the details of the present estimates, and to contend that there was nothing in them to be viewed with alarm for their effect upon either. He did not hesitate to assert it to be his opinion, that the narrowness of our peace establishments had in former times been the cause of war, and had thrown on the country a larger expenditure than would otherwise have been called for, while to these might justly be ascribed, an incalculable waste of human life. Whatever might be said in praise of the establishment of 1792, it was due to the memory of Mr. Pitt to state, that in his opinion it was smaller than it ought to have been. The correctness of that opinion had been fatally proved by experience.

A noble lord had described the splendid achievements of our army as having proceeded from a body of men comparatively small, and fresh from the pursuits of civil life; and to this last circumstance he had seemed so ascribe the great successes which had crowned their arms in the cause of their country. It was true, that all that could be done by heroism, all that could be done by loyalty, all that could be done by zeal, all that could be done by the most sincere devotion to their country's glory, had at all times been effected by the British army. But it was equally true, that at all times their numbers had been such as to admit of the display of those noble qualities being made as advantageous for the interest of the nation, as for the character of the individuals themselves. If they cast their eyes back on the events which occurred early in this war—if they looked at the difficulties which the government had to contend with before it could fit out even a small expedition—if they looked at the unavoidable delays which had occurred, at the enormous bounties which it had been necessary to pay, and at the fruitless efforts which had been made, it would be seen how unfortunate the situation of the country had been at the period to which he alluded. The difficulties which he had described had probably been only surmounted, by an appeal to the public spirit of individuals. He should ever remember with pride and satisfaction the manner in which this appeal had been answered. Those who then stood forward, had established their own claims to glory and renown; but remembering this, he could not forget the numerous evils which, notwithstanding their patriotism, had been endured in consequence of the peace establishment having been made on too narrow a scale. This, he contended, for a very considerable period, had had the effect of crippling all our exertions in the war, and had, he repeated it, caused the nation to sustain an enormous expense in money, and an incalculable loss of life. To this circumstance—to the weakness of our army, he believed we might ascribe many of the calamities which had grown out of the late war, the object of which would probably have been accomplished at a much earlier period than it was, had our military force been in a respectable state of efficiency at its commencement. How insufficient our army had been, might be seen if we turned to the glorious history of the operations at Toulon, at an early period of the contest, and to that of the events which took place in the West Indies when sir Ralph Abercrombie was sent thither with an expedition. Our army was then so weak, that the noble lord at the head of the war department, had found, with consternation that he had not a disposeable force at his command, of more than 7,500 men. It was then that 1,800 officers had been of necessity, placed upon half-pay, and here it was proper that he should state a fact, which redounded to the eternal honour of that illustrious duke, who was then, and who was now, at the head of the army: he permitted no military patronage to be exercised, till these officers had been provided with new commissions, and were restored to their former situation in the service. The result of this, had been a display of heroism on the part of these officers, who had immortalized their own names, and contributed largely to the splendid success of the war. The noble viscount then described the feeble state of the army in 1796 and again in 1798, when it was painful to reflect, that the government had not more than 2600 regular troops to protect the country from a threatened invasion. Such was the melancholy situation in which the British nation had been placed, in consequence of the low state to which our military power was reduced by the peace establishment which succeeded the war that was closed in 1783.

After the peace of 1802, the most economical course which could be adopted was judged to be that which maintained a considerable army in a state of efficiency, to prevent the recurrence of those evils which had flowed from an opposite policy. Notwithstanding all the groundless charges preferred against that government, a force of 95,000 troops had been kept up with the sanction of parliament, till after the definitive treaty of peace had been signed. The force kept up in 1802 consisted of 95,000 soldiers and 50,000 seamen. Subsequently 40,000 troops on account of England and 30,000 for Ireland were called for, as the force necessary to be maintained in time of peace. With respect to that peace, whatever might have been said of it, he, far from feeling shame for the part he had in making it, should ever reflect with pride and satisfaction on the course which he had thought it his duty to pursue on that occasion. Had not that peace been made, and had not the fact been proved, that war was the choice of France and not of England—had not the British public been thus taught the true character of the enemy, he was sure those exertions would never have been made, and those resources could never have been found, which were subsequently placed in the hands of the government of the country, and which had finally enabled them to bring the war to that triumphant conclusion which now filled us with exultation. But, whatever were the censures which were lavished on that peace, amidst all the objections urged against its conditions and its policy, it never was once asserted, that the force then proposed to be kept up in time of peace could prove in any way dangerous to the constitution. Though fault was found with the policy of the minister who concluded that peace, among all the various objections which had proceeded from different quarters, never had the army to be maintained under it, been viewed as the subject of rational alarm by the friends to the British constitution. If, then, no such cry was raised at that period, what was there in the establishment now proposed that could justify that anxiety and fear which was expressed?

In 1806, when negociations were entered into with France by the noble baron opposite, on the basis of the *uti possidetis*, he would ask if those negociations, in which he knew the noble baron to have been sincere, had terminated in peace, could a smaller peace establishment than that now proposed have been securely adopted? He was satisfied a smaller could not have been thought of. Closed on the basis of the *uti possidetis*, which would have left France in possession of all the dominion which, up to that period, her ambitious ruler usurped on the continent, was it possible he could be told that a smaller peace establishment could have been recommended to parliament? One at least as large would have been necessary, and that for a longer period than that now intended to be kept up. He congratulated the House and the country, and, most of all, he congratulated the noble lords opposite, that those negociations had not terminated in peace. They, more than any other persons in the country, must rejoice in seeing that the nation had happily avoided the danger which then menaced it. Had their negociations brought about that pacification, which he knew it was the sincere wish of their hearts to effect, it would have left the then ruler of France on his usurped throne, and not only would he have retained sovereign power, in contempt of all right, and in defiance of all law, over the territories of the legitimate king of France, but he would have had dominion over other parts of the continent; and would it then have been possible for those precautions to have been taken which had now been enforced by the allies? Would it then have been possible to have obtained possession of the French fortresses? Would it then have been possible to have established those checks on ambition which the army now stationed on the French frontier, and the other arrangements made by the late treaty had supplied? No: these advantages could not have been obtained; and he therefore thanked God that the counsel of the noble lords opposite had been rejected on that occasion by parliament and by the country. He would ask them, under the circumstances which must have accompanied a peace concluded at that time, could they have proposed to parliament a smaller establishment than the present? They might have saved a thousand men in one colony, and five hundred in another, and thus, perhaps, a force smaller than that now to be kept up by two or three thousand troops, might have been demanded; but would they say that a larger force than 25,000 men for England would not have been indispensably necessary? Whatever might be their opinion, he was sure that House and the country would feel with him, that a smaller military force would not have been sufficient.

The question now before the House was, whether the army proposed to be maintained was greater than was necessary for the safety of the country, and the security of our foreign possessions? They had heard a great deal about a standing army being unknown to the constitution, but when it was remembered that the militia, but for domestic service, could not be compelled to carry arms more than twenty-eight days in the year, it would be seen that the words which seventy or a hundred years ago had been introduced into the mutiny bill, and which carrying into effect the wise principles on which our ancestors acted, had given a force to defend the Crown, to protect the foreign possessions of the country, and to maintain the balance of power in Europe, were not now to be neglected. By maintaining the balance of power in Europe, it was meant to maintain the peace of Europe, as without the balance of power being established, it was tolerably clear its peace could not be secured.—The noble marquis had made some observations on the distribution of the force which it was proposed to maintain, on which he felt it necessary to offer a few words. He had particularly dwelt on that portion of it which was intended for the defence of our possessions in the East. To the noble marquis it might appear, that 20,000 men (the force which he formerly wished to be kept up for the defence of India and Ceylon) were no longer necessary. Without accusing him of inconsistency, he would contend that government were bound to pay as much attention to the representations of the noble lord who now held the high situation of governor-general of India, as it was formerly their duty to give to the suggestions of the noble marquis. He had recommended that, under existing circumstances, the army of India should be maintained as it formerly had been established, and while government were yet uncertain whether or not the war in that part of the world had terminated, surely it was not their duty to diminish that force which was already under arms. To take away the means of prosecuting the war with vigour, if unhappily it should still be going on, was surely not that course which the noble marquis, who so much objected to starving a war, would recommend to the adoption of ministers.

He now came to notice the force kept up in the West India islands. The troops stationed there amounted to 9,000. Of these 4,000 were blacks, and 2,000 were deserters. This force could not be reduced without great inconvenience, even if the whole of it were not, strictly speaking, necessary for the defence of those colonies, as it was difficult to tell in what way the individuals composing it could be satisfactorily disposed of. As to America, to him it was inconceivable how an army of 9,500 men could be objected to, when it was remembered that we had a frontier of a thousand miles in extent to defend, and garrisons, dock-yards, and military establishments to protect. He was as willing as any man could be, to effect every possible saving for the public, but he would not consent to an arrangement so fatal to our interests, as that must be, which went to reduce this force. He considered that which he had now asserted, would be proved, to the satisfaction of every one who looked back to the history of the last two years. To that jealousy, which was ever anxious to watch over the establishment of a standing army, he was convinced we owed the preservation of the British constitution. He wished still to see this spirit survive; but he denied that there was any thing in the arrangements now proposed by government, that ought to be received with alarm. The character of our present army was not such as threatened the existence of our liberties. The officers who composed it were not adventurers, like those who recently followed the usurper of the throne of the king of France. They did not enter the service to gratify their thirst for rapine and plunder. They consisted of the gentry and sons of the gentry of the country, and in their connexions we had the surest pledges of their attachment to that constitutional liberty which they fought to defend. The 25,000 men to be kept up in England were barely sufficient, when the necessary deductions were made for non-effectives, to defend the dock-yards, the garrisons, the military establishments, and the islands of Jersey, Guernsey, and Alderney. The force to be kept in the Ionian islands was not too great, and that to be maintained in Ireland, from the imperfect state of civilization of some parts of the country, and disturbed state of several counties, owing to the want of habitual industry among the lower classes of society, was generally admitted to be as small as it could be made with prudence.

But the noble marquis had said, he sought in vain to find any beneficial legislation for Ireland. He would refer the noble marquis to the several commissions which had been appointed to inquire into alleged grievances—to the reports which had been made, and to the bills which had passed through parliament to effect the wished-for reforms. He would refer him to the exertions of the chief secretary for Ireland (whose conduct it was impossible too highly to praise) to diffuse the blessings of education among the whole population of Ireland, and to the arrangements made to carry this benevolent design into effect, with regard to the religion of those who endeavoured to avail themselves of the charity. He would further refer the noble marquis to the efforts made to give effect to the labours of the society for promoting a knowledge of christianity in Ireland, and to the bills which had placed the agricultural trade of that sister country on the same footing as that of England, which two years ago had the effect of giving 2,000,000*l*. in money to Ireland for her reported produce. With respect to our finances, he would admit, under the present circumstances of the country, the most austere economy was imperiously dictated by duty to his majesty's ministers, and it was the anxious wish of himself and his colleagues, that all their measures should be closely examined, that it might be seen they made no unnecessary demand on the purse of the country. If it was contended after the statement made by his noble friend (earl Bathurst) with respect to our colonies, in which it was shown that instead of causing a loss, they were a source of great profit, that we could not bear the expense which they brought upon us now, it was proper that they should declare to the world, that England had sunk beneath the weight of her triumphs, and unable to sustain the glory she had acquired, must renounce her acquisitions from inability to preserve them. But to this doctrine he would never subscribe. While on the subject of the peace much remark had been made on the noble statesman who had been principally concerned in negotiating it. He did not hesitate to assert that the nation owed to that noble lord (Castlereagh) not less gratitude than was due to the splendid services of the duke of Wellington. The new colonies, it had been shown, while they created a charge of 800,000*l.*, brought in aid of the revenue no less a sum, in one year, than 1,500,000*l.* without including the duties paid by Mauritius and Ceylon. But it was not by what they paid in money that the nation ought to judge of their value, but by the vast benefits which were derived from them, to our navy, our commerce, and our manufactures. Under these circumstances, though anxious no opportunity should be lost of practising the most rigid economy, in his life he had never given a more conscientious vote than that which he now felt himself called upon to give, against the motion of the noble marquis.

Lord *Grenville* said, if any man in that House or the country had supposed that the estimates which had been proposed were in reality meant to be temporary, that idea must have been completely abandoned after the speeches they had that night heard; for the argument of the noble earl (Bathurst) had been, that the great standing army proposed was necessary to the magnitude and extent of our empire. The argument of the noble viscount (Sidmouth) had been, that the existence of a great standing army in time of peace was desirable on principle. It was not contended, that the intermediate state between peace and war, in which those negotiations, praised only by those who had taken part in them, had placed us, had rendered these large establishments necessary for a time, but that it was the general policy of this country that there should be a large peace establishment; and that in all past time, our wretched condition, our degraded station in the eyes of Europe, had been owing to the detestable policy of low peace establishments! If he had, before he entered that House been convinced, that on the decision of that night would depend, whether we should preserve inviolate the spirit and form of that constitution which had been handed down to us from our forefathers, or gradually, and not slowly, adopt that military character which had extinguished every spark of liberty on the continent of Europe, what he had since heard had impressed him with a still more awful conviction of the magnitude of the question. He maintained, that the whole experience of the country had been against the proposed estimates; and the arguments of the noble lords who had supported them; for in proportion as our establishments had been low at the beginning of a war, had our glory been raised during its progress; in proportion as our establishments had been high at the beginning of a war, had our success been inadequate to our expectations. This was not to be wondered at as the effect of chance, but was perfectly consistent with the principles on which the military character of the British soldier was founded. For as in garrisons and camps the same service could not be obtained from him as from the subject of a despotic monarch, so in extraordinary emergencies his achievements were superior to any thing which the subjects of a military monarch could perform. He denied that any inconvenience had arisen from the smallness of our military establishments in 1792. Was there any man who took so narrow an idea of the war which ensued, as to suppose, that its event could have been varied by any army which it could have been possible that we could have had at that time? The error consisted in too great reduction of the marine, and not in the low establishment of the military force; and if he wished to prevent a recurrence of difficulties, he should have advised his majesty's government to pursue a course directly contrary to that which they had adopted; he should have recommended an augmentation of our marine, in preference to an augmentation of our army. He utterly denied that the experience of facts had given any statesman the smallest reason for wishing, that our army at that time had been 20,000 men more; and in regard to the illustrious character who then directed our affairs, it was a little hard on the memory of Mr. Pitt, that instead of being judged by his actions, he should be tried by imputed opinions. He had asserted before, and would again assert, that nothing ever was expressed on that subject but great satisfaction at the rigid economy which enabled that wise man not only to appropriate a considerable portion of the revenue to the reduction of the national debt, but also to propose and actually effect a diminution of the public burthens. In every moment of that awful trial which he sustained, he felt still greater reason to approve of his policy; and his majesty's ministers would do well to follow the same line of conduct. At this moment, however, when the pressure of taxation and the distress of the country were beyond example, they said, this would be a saving of only 800,000*l.* a year, and that would be a saving of only 600,000*l.* a year; but let their lordships recollect, that Mr. Pitt thought it worth while to come down to parliament and propose a reduction of the military establishment, which was to save 50,000*l.* Was it to be endured, then, that they should now say, it was an object not worthy of consideration? It was, in his judgment, one of greater importance than any thing connected with the interests of the country; it affected its vital, its constitutional safety; and on it must depend whether our freedom should remain, or a military government be established; for such had been the result in every country, and at every period, as both ancient and modern history most incontestibly proved. If, in a moment when he considered this country as the only civil power left in Europe, he could exclude from his eyes the frightful magnitude of the question of administering the government otherwise than we had hitherto enjoyed it, yet, on financial considerations alone, it was the duty of ministers to look as closely into the state of our affairs as Mr. Pitt had done; and they were bound to employ every means to effect a saving, though it were even smaller than that which he had thought it his pride and happiness to propose. He (lord Grenville) thought a much larger reduction of expenditure than any yet spoken of might be made, by a reduction of this enormous military establishment. The possible exigencies of this country in peace did not require an army of 150,000 men, and he was ready to say, that no case had been made out to justify the maintenance of so large a force. His noble friend consented to exclude from the consideration the 30,000 in France, provided the noble lords opposite would shut out the balance of power in Europe, for which this army was to be kept up; but they had argued on the necessity of maintaining this army for the purpose of supporting the balance of power. He would desire their lordships to consider, what sort of a picture of Europe this statement of their's of a balance of power afforded. It was not the treaty which the noble lord had made, but the valour of our generals and soldiers, that had placed us in a situation which did not render it necessary to keep a single man on the continent for the maintenance of the balance of power in Europe. He had always thought that the first point to consider was, what is the nature and amount of the danger with which we are threatened? As the noble viscount had argued this question, he could just as gratuitously suppose that the island of Jamaica was likely to be overturned by double a force of 150,000 men. But what was the real amount of that danger now, which we were accustomed to meet formerly by large military establishments? It was argued, that our laws should be administered, our revenue should be collected, by a large standing army. Was this the British constitution? He had not so read the history of this country. He had read, that until the monarch of France attempted to destroy the liberties of every independent state in Europe, and to force on us a king whom we rejected, and a religion contrary to our belief, there never was a period when a standing army was recommended to the House of Commons. If, therefore, the only justification had been the existence of a great standing army in France, what could noble lords now allege, when there was not only no standing army in that country, and the government very rightly were not taking active steps to form one, but was rather impressed with a well-founded belief that every step towards re-organizing the army was a step towards the destruction of the throne. If that necessity no longer existed, which would alone justify a large military force, we should take every benefit of the respite, and diminish our army down to the lowest standard ever known in England. When it was said, therefore, that this was an estimate only for this year, he would answer, it was because it was only for this year that he objected to it. The present period was more unfit for a large standing army than any which the mind of man could have imagined; and yet his majesty's ministers proposed to their lordships an army such as no Englishman before this year had ever endured the mention of. The maintenance of 30,000 on the continent was to meet a danger nearly visionary. He was told, indeed, that the reason for keeping up this army was, because the continent of Europe was covered with arms, and the military power had obtained a preponderance over the civil. But were ministers therefore to cover the soil of England with arms? If they had secured the object of all their wishes abroad, they had placed this country in such a situation as deprived her of those advantages for which alone we fought. He asked for what did we renew the war? It was renewed because a great military establishment was more expensive to our finances, and what was worse, much more dangerous to the constitution. He would request ministers to repeat the arguments by which they induced their lordships to embark again in that tremendous conflict. It was to guard against the danger which the return of Buonaparté was likely to create. For that we embarked in war—for that we fought—for that we conquered—and for all the blood, the dear blood, which we had shed, we were now to have an establishment which it never entered into the mind of any Englishman to conceive, or into the heart of any Englishman to endure. He agreed with those who thought it would be for the benefit of humanity (and he hoped we were not yet come to the period when these should be considered as mere words of course) that Austria, Prussia, and Russia, should be induced to diminish their large military establishments. He thought this was an object which England might have accomplished, if we had adopted a course directly opposite to that which we had adopted. The best argument would have been example. England should have said, "See what I have done, and then ask yourselves whether what I have done for you was by keeping up an army of 150,000 men in time of peace. No, it was not by such measures that I have been able to render you such services. It was by low establishments, by encouraging the arts of peace, by protecting commerce, by teaching the people to love the principles of a civil government. These were the institutions by which I induced them to become what no subjects of any military government on earth would have been." If the large military establishments of Europe were to be reduced, some power should set the example; and to whom could the world more fairly and naturally look than Great Britain? In regard to the establishment in 1786, there were many circumstances at that time, and which continued down to 1791, which imposed on this country the necessity of a larger military establishment than any circumstances which now existed could possibly justify. Ministers, however, did not look at the circumstances of that period; and, *primâ facie*, the establishment which they now proposed was much too large for us.—Then it was argued, with respect to the troops allowed for India, that these would be no expense to the public, as the East India Company, forsooth, would pay them—that was, when it had by begging or borrowing contrived to pay its own troops; and if not in any other way, then by applying to that never-failing resource—the public purse. In the present situation of India, not one man ought to be maintained beyond what was necessary for guarding the frontiers; and he thought the number stated by his noble friend rather too much than too little. In the last peace the number was ten thousand men, and yet at that time India was much more exposed than it was at this time, though the frontier was much more extensive. Hostile powers were then placed along the whole length of two of the sides of the triangle which formed the peninsula of India. Tippoo was in full power, and held a correspondence with our European enemy. Holland was under the control of that enemy, with Trincomalee and the Cape of Good Hope in her possession, and France was in possession of the Mauritius, with every disposition and large means to endanger our Indian possessions. What was the situation of India now? Tippoo's power had been destroyed, all imminent danger from the Nizam, the Mahrattas, or any other Indian power, taken away, and all apprehensions of the intrigues and enterprises of our great European enemy removed. Yet they were called upon to maintain 3,000 men at the Cape to guard against a few Caffres, with proportionate establishments, and for similar purposes in our other possessions in that quarter. *Primâ facie*, then, the establishment ought to be less for India than at any former period;

and if he were to select one particular more than another as an instance of the extravagance of these estimates, it would be this for the East Indies. But the case of the West Indies was not less strong than that of the East, and the idea of maintaining 13,000 men there, where two or three thousand had been maintained before, was perfectly monstrous. But then the argument was, "You cannot have less than 3,000 men for Jamaica." And why?—Because the legislature of Jamaica had passed a law, by which they enacted, that they must have 3,000 troops, and therefore they told the legislature and government of Great Britain, "You must give us 3,000 men, or we shall not pay a farthing towards the expenses of the troops." Doubts had been entertained,—ill-founded doubts as he conceived—whether the legislature of Great Britain could bind that of Jamaica. But now the tables were turned, and the legislature of Jamaica was to bind that of Great Britain. If that was the case, instead of holding the high station which was talked of, we should be sunk indeed. But here, too, he insisted that the establishment might be less than before; for the change in St. Domingo, instead of diminishing, increased our security. France, before, had possession of St. Domingo, the richest and most valuable part of the West Indies, from which Jamaica might at any time have been easily assailed, so that that island always had the enemy at its gates. No such danger was to be apprehended now. Look at what the state of the Spanish main had been, and what it was now? Then every one of the Leeward islands was to have a military force. Why then take possession of St. Lucie? In 1786, danger must have been apprehended from that quarter, the island being in possession of France; but now there was no room for any such apprehension. Driven, therefore, from this ground, they stumbled upon a most happy argument. It was true, they said there was a greater degree of security both from domestic and foreign enemies; but then it was necessary to secure the islands against their own guards; so that the troops, for want of something else to do, were to be employed in fighting against each other. As to Demerara, Berbice, and Essequibo, after having taken them from Holland, we restored them, and purchased them again; and now it would be worth while to give another three millions to Holland, upon condition that she should take them back again, as it never could be for our advantage to have colonies in that part of the continent of America. But the noble earl opposite said, that the revenue which we derived from them would more than repay us the expense. He had listened with delight to this, as he thought that the noble earl was about to show that we had one colony, the revenue of which indemnified us for our expenses on its account. But the revenue turned out to be the taxes which were paid by our own subjects on its produce when imported.—Then as to Gibraltar and Malta, the principle upon which the ministers appeared to proceed was, that the stronger a place was by nature, the greater garrison it required. The line of defence could not in these places be extended, and therefore the only principle was, that the garrison ought to be in the inverse ratio to the occasion for it. Gibraltar was strong by nature, the Spanish lines were now removed, and a smaller garrison would serve, and therefore it must have a greater. Malta, too, was impregnable by land, but might be in great danger from a superior fleet; and, therefore, ministers abandon the naval defence of the place, and give it a large garrison. It was impossible to conceive what could be the object of all this, unless it was to find some excuse for keeping up this 150,000 men.—Then, as to the Ionian islands, Russia and Austria for obvious reasons could not agree that they should be in the possession of either, and on that account only they were placed under our protection. Of what advantage they could be to us he could not conceive. But why keep troops there? They ought to rest for protection on the balance, which did not consist altogether in opposing one great military power to another, but likewise in that protection which the weaker powers ought to derive from the faith of treaties.—Then as to the state of Ireland, he hoped that measures would be taken to compel ministers to say directly whether they would, or would not, enter upon an inquiry into the condition of that country, as to which, notwithstanding the importance of the topic, nothing had been said in the speech from the throne. They had tried their method of government with respect to Ireland, and they now came with the result; which was, that it could be kept down only by 25,000 bayonets.—As to the establishment for this country, there was no duty more sacred in his opinion, than to take care that the officers of justice and of the revenue should be armed with the staff, and not with the sword; and even with respect to the army itself, he spoke in the hearing of some of the greatest military officers that ever lived, and appealed to them, whether any thing could be more pernicious to the troops than their being thus employed as police and revenue officers? he was sorry to say, that it had become too much the practice to call the military in aid of the civil power, or rather to execute the duties of the civil power altogether by means of the military; and an instance of this had lately occurred, where a great city was left for two days to sack and plunder, until a troop of horse arrived. He was therefore totally adverse to this large military establishment in time of peace. In the present situation of the country there existed the strongest objection to it, merely on the ground of finance. But he chiefly objected to it on a higher ground, which was, that it threatened the entire destruction of our civil constitution.

The Earl of *Liverpool* declared, that in the exhausted state of their lordships, he was almost ashamed to address them; but after the line of argument adopted by the noble baron who had just sat down, after the charge which the noble baron had advanced against his majesty's government, not of having merely in one, two, or three instances, framed the estimates with a surplus of a few hundred men as applicable to this or that colony, but of having endeavoured to change the whole policy of the state, and to convert it from a government of law and liberty into a military government, he felt that he should not do his duty to himself, to his noble friends, to their lordships, and to the country, if he did not, even at that late hour, rise to repel the noble baron's attack, and to state the reasons on which he conceived that their lordships would agree with him that it was utterly unfounded. He was perfectly willing to accept from the noble marquis who opened the debate, the statement made by him in the beginning of his speech, as the fair ground of the question between them. He agreed with the noble marquis, that parliament and the country always looked with jealousy at any army in time of peace. He agreed with him, that not only was it a principle of the constitution that there should be no army in time of peace without the consent of parliament, but that the law passed yearly to regulate the numbers and enforce the discipline of the military force maintained in the country, brought annually under the consideration of parliament, the whole question of the description, the amount, and the laws of our military establishments. But, nevertheless, none of the noble lords opposite would say, that there had been any period of our history in which some military force was not considered necessary. It remained, therefore, to inquire, what was the principle on which the extent of that force ought to be decided, and on what ground it was to be determined how large a force should exist beyond the mere personal array of a monarchical government.

The necessity for any military force must rest on one of three principles: 1st, The security of his majesty's dominions: 2dly, the case which might be supposed to exist of affording aid to the civil authorities; 3dly, the preservation of the balance of power in Europe. The noble marquis who had moved the address had said, that in putting out of the question the 30,000 men employed by Great Britain in France, he thought it also right to omit the consideration of all force elsewhere, as affecting the balance of power in Europe. In that statement the noble earl said, he perfectly agreed. He readily admitted, that while political necessity demanded that those 30,000 British troops should be kept abroad, that was force enough to refer to the consideration of the balance of power. The question therefore became narrowed, and was to be viewed only in respect to the other two principles which he had mentioned; namely, the security of his majesty's dominions, and the support of the civil authorities. He would go a step further, and say that he was ready to try the question by an examination of what had been the policy of the country with respect to it during the greater part of the last century. He would undertake to prove, to the conviction of every rational, of every temperate mind, that on a fair comparison there were no grounds for asserting that the military force proposed by the estimates on their lordships' table, was greater than the military force during the period to which he had referred. He would likewise state, that with respect to our foreign dominions and possessions, he positively denied that there was any thing in the policy of former times incongruous to the policy on which the present estimates were founded. If their lordships would look back from the year 1720, or the year 1722, and take the reigns of the two first princes of the family now sitting on the throne, they would find that the amount of force maintained in Great Britain, independently of Ireland and the colonies, had been in general about 18,000 men. In the earlier part of that period, from the year 1722 to the year 1730, the whole amount of the military force in the colonies and plantations was between 5 and 6000. That force was gradually increased. After the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, in the year 1750, before the dangers of a new war arose, the peace establishment of the colonies was nearly doubled, amounting to 10 or 11,000 men. On what principle did that augmentation take place? Was it owing to the accession of any new colonies? No. We were at peace, and consequently could not obtain any such acquisition. It proceeded from the growth of our own colonies; from the increase of their population; and from the extension of the occupation of territory arising out of that increase. Let their lordships follow the subject further—to the succeeding war, the war of 1756. At the peace of 1763, Great Britain obtained considerable additions to her territory and colonies, and then our military force there was increased from 10 to between 14 and 15,000 men. On what principle was that done; and done too by an administration that piqued itself on its economy, and the popular charge against which was extreme parsimony? It was done partly on account of the increase in the old colonies, and partly on account of the accession of the new. Of what did those new colonies consist? What was the great augmentation of territory that the peace conferred on Great Britain? Their lordships well knew that the administration of that day built their reputation on the terms of that peace; and that they obtained Canada, on the one side of North America, and Florida on the other. The noble baron's argument went to declare that that accession of territory was not a reason for adding to the colonial force, but, on the contrary, that it was a reason for reducing it; for that as long as Canada was in the possession of France, and Florida in the possession of Spain, the British colonies were in danger; but that North America having been cleared altogether of enemies, a diminution, and not an increase of force ought to have been made. He had adduced these instances to establish the fact; but he should have thought that common sense, if it had not been evinced by the whole current of British history, would have shown, that an increase of dominion and of colonies must lead to an increase of military force. Doubts, indeed, might exist as to the value of any acquisitions of that nature. It might be questioned, whether they were worth the expense of maintaining them; but that had nothing to do with the fact—that there could not be an increase of colonies and dominions without an increase of military force.

He had thought it necessary to call their lordships' attention to these facts; but he should have been ashamed to argue upon them had he not seen the way in which the subject had been treated both on that evening, and on former occasions. He had shown from the experience of former times, clear and positive proof, that this country had always been accustomed to act on the policy which he had described. He next came to consider the question with reference more especially to that period with which the noble lords appeared some time since, desirous to draw the comparison, although, as his noble friend near him (earl Bathurst) had observed, they had shifted the periods of comparison as seemed best suited to the convenience of their argument. On a former occasion he understood that they preferred the period of 1792. Now, for reasons which he perfectly understood, although he had not sufficient leisure to explain them, they preferred the year 1786, or an earlier period still. He would take 1792 as the period of comparison; and he would tell their lordships why he did so. He was not one of those who were afraid to avow that he concurred in opinion with his noble friend near him (lord Sidmouth), and that he sincerely thought, that in 1792 the military force in Great Britain was decidedly lower than it ought to have been. He repeated, that he alluded to the force in Great Britain; generally speaking it was not so out of Great Britain. He would now state to their lordships the reasons that induced him to prefer 1792 as the period of comparison. The noble baron and the noble marquis who spoke about the middle of the debate (marquis Wellesley) had asserted that they could not pronounce whether any particular force was necessary for any particular colony at any particular time, unless they attended to the danger against which that colony had to guard. It was on that ground that he took the period to which he had referred; for he was old enough to remember the discussions that then took place, and the impressions respecting political events, which led him to a conclusion different from that to which, on that occasion, Mr. Pitt had arrived. He was old enough to remember the reasons assigned for the low military establishments of that day. Even at the present moment of victory and of peace, let the security of that peace be asserted as strongly as it might, it could not be asserted more strongly than was the security of the peace in 1792; nor at the present moment was there a less sense of the danger of war than existed at the former period. He would call to their lordships' recollection, that a great man, perhaps in the philosophical view of political subjects, the greatest man that ever lived—Mr. Burke—had, in the debate on the army estimates in 1790, pronounced a strong opinion in favour of a low peace establishment, founded on the striking declaration, that "France was blotted out of the map of Europe;" and, on the other hand, that Mr. Pitt, the greatest practical statesman that ever existed, in his statement of the prospects arising from the sinking fund, described the results which would ensue from fifteen years of peace; and declared, that there never had been a period of our history in which we stood so good a chance of a long continuance of that blessing. At the very moment that these great statesmen—great in their different ways—were uttering these opinions, in which they were confirmed by the great majority of those about them, those events were in preparation which, in less than a twelvemonth, plunged the country into that war from which she had but just emerged. Was he saying too much, therefore, under the distinct recollection of the circumstances of the period which he had described, when he declared, that with every possible desire to economise, he could not, bearing in mind the essential interests of the country, agree to too considerable a reduction of the peace establishment. While we admired the virtues, while we respected the talents—and while, in most instances, we were anxious to imitate the example of our great predecessors, we ought even from their occasional mistakes and miscalculations to derive some lessons of wisdom and security [Hear, hear!].

But even with all this consideration, if their lordships would compare the present estimates with those of 1792, they would not find any thing in them that could justly be called extravagant or improvident. His noble friend (earl Bathurst) who had replied to the noble marquis, had so ably gone through the details of this comparison, that he would not attempt to to follow him; but would content himself with a few observations. And first, with respect to the East Indies. The force proposed for that quarter stood on a principle of necessity distinct from any other. At home, in the Mediterranean, in North America, and even in the West Indies, if danger arose, there were the internal means of providing against it. But, in India, there was, first the external danger of an European enemy (which he willingly admitted, was in the present posture of public affairs next to nothing), and, secondly, the internal danger of attack by the native powers. Should the latter take place, in however formidable a degree, there were no means of providing against it other than those originally possessed. It had been the opinion of an able, experienced and faithful servant of the Crown, intimately acquainted with the policy of India (the late lord Melville), that there must always be a military force in India considerable enough for war as well as for peace; because, from the remoteness of the mother country, there would not otherwise, in the event of sudden hostility, be the means of providing in sufficient time a force to repel it. He was much gratified by having the concurrence on this point of his noble friend (if he would allow him to call him so) on the opposite side of the House (marquis Wellesley) who, as had been stated by his noble friend near him, did in the year 1805 deliver in that House an opinion which there could be no doubt was well and thoroughly considered both with respect to the amount of force necessary for India, and to its distribution. That opinion was, that sixteen regiments of infantry, each at least 1000 men strong, and four regiments of dragoons, were always necessary. Was this opinion given in time of war? No. When we were at peace with France, and with all the native powers of India, Such was the view which the noble marquis took at that time; and so disposed were his majesty's government to act on that suggestion, that previous to the Nepaul war, orders had actually been sent out for the return to Great Britain of four battalions of infantry and one of cavalry; which would have left in India precisely the amount of force recommended by the noble marquis. Their lordships would, he was persuaded, not think that on receiving information of the breaking out of the war with the Nepauls, his majesty's ministers could do any other than countermand the return home of the force in question, and arm the governor-general with all the means which were calculated to bring the contest to a speedy and successful termination. With respect to the other East India colonies, on that of Ceylon there did not seem to exist any difference of opinion as to the amount of force there employed. In the Mauritius, the garrison might perhaps to a certain degree be reduced. But, at the same time, when it was considered that this was a new colony, that the inhabitants were not accustomed to a British government, and that their affections were not rivetted to it; that the colony had long been in the possession of France; and still more, that during the whole of the French revolution it had successively shared the spirit of all the revolutionary governments in a way unknown to any other colonial state, he thought he might fairly put it to the candour and to the wisdom of their lordships, whether, under such circumstances, his majesty's government would be justified in reducing the military force in the Mauritius beyond that amount at which it then stood.

He should next go to the consideration of Jamaica and the other West India colonies; and he must observe, in the first place, that the arguments of his noble friend, with respect to the sentiments of the house of assembly in Jamaica, had been completely misunderstood by the noble marquis opposite. His noble friend, in what he said, had merely stated the opinion of the legislative body of that Island, as to what they considered a necessary force for its defence; but that opinion did not preclude the government at home from exercising its own discretion upon the subject, and for himself, he decidedly thought that the extent of the military establishment proposed to be kept up there was no more than sufficient for its adequate defence. Would any one, indeed, be bold enough to say that they should leave that island without some British garrison, or that it should be entrusted wholly to its own internal resources for defence? With respect to the other West India islands, if ever there was a conclusive argument urged as to the propriety of allotting to them that proportion of military strength which was included in the proposed estimates, it was the speech of his noble friend. He was perfectly ready, however, to admit, and anxiously desirous, that the force should be reduced as much as possible. He was equally ready to admit, that if it were not for the proportion of black troops in those islands, which materially affected their internal security, a reduction to the extent of two thousand men might take place. But he would ask any noble lord in that House—he would put it to the common sense of any man in the country—whether, when they considered the increased number of the islands to be defended, and when they considered that the black corps amounted to between four and five thousand men, it could be maintained that the proposed establishments were too large? He was far from wishing to depreciate the value or importance of the black regiments: during the war they had saved the lives of European soldiers to a great extent; and under those peculiar circumstances, four thousand blacks were more valuable than four thousand whites: but when they had to determine upon the question of reduction, every person would feel, every colonist must feel (and the wishes and sentiments of the colonists on such a point, were not to be disregarded), that those white troops must bear a proportion to the black ones. The real question for consideration therefore was, upon the possibility of reducing the black regiments; and as to transferring them to other quarters, he would ask the noble lord who suggested that measure, and who was so anxious to enforce economy, whether he did not think it would be much more expensive to pursue that course, than the one actually proposed?

With regard to North America, he should trouble the House with only a few words. Those settlements had increased to an enormous extent during the course of the present war, and he would put it to the reflection of their lordships, when they considered not only the increase of population and of cultivation in that quarter, but the increasing strength and resources of the United States, whether some enlargement of our means of defence ought not to take place? He was perfectly agreed upon the propriety of what had been urged, that we must rely upon the loyalty and zeal of the inhabitants themselves for any effectual resistance in case of invasion; he agreed that the military force now proposed would be insufficient of itself, to repel any great danger; but even then, however much we might wish and indeed might be compelled, to rely upon the militia of the country, yet that militia must have its foundation upon some military establishment, to enable it to act with decisive success. The necessity of that system of co-operation had been powerfully felt during the last war with America. Did not the militia of Canada then exclaim, Give us some regular troops to rest upon, and we shall be able to defend the country? There was, besides, another circumstance to be taken into consideration with respect to these possessions. During at least six months of the year, they were shut out from the possibility of receiving reinforcements; and he would ask, therefore, whether the proposed increase upon the force allotted in 1792 for their defence was more that the necessity justified, or whether it would be a wise and prudential policy to leave the Canadas exposed to the dangers which might arise from any sudden or unforeseen emergencies?

He should now proceed to consider the question as applicable to our colonies in the Mediterranean. The garrison proposed to be maintained in Gibraltar was not so great as in the year 1792: and he believed, from the best information which he had been able to obtain, that the force now intended to be stationed there was not more than sufficient to perform the different duties of the place. The noble marquis seemed to think that a great advantage had been gained, and a great security obtained, by the destruction of the Spanish lines. The destruction of those lines was certainly a precaution which this country had a right to ask, but it was not of such signal importance, with a view to the safety of Gibraltar, as might be imagined. He had been at some pains to make inquiries upon that subject, and every military man with whom he had conversed, stated, that the additional security obtained by that measure was, in point of fact, worth little or nothing. He would apply the same considerations to Malta; and with respect to both those places, the force he should recommend would be precisely what was necessary to guard against any sudden surprise, and no more. It should be remembered, that our possessions in the Mediterranean were not like those in the West Indies, nor like those in the East Indies. With regard to the former, we should always be upon equal terms with France, in the event of hostilities, and with regard to the latter, we should even have some degree of superiority over her. But how stood the case in reference to the Mediterranean? Both France and Spain were at the very gates of those colonies, while we were at such a distance, that, in the event of any danger arising, a considerable time must elapse before we could send out any succours to them. Besides, they constituted the proud sources of our power and the emblems of our greatness. They were not to be put in comparison with the acquisition of a West India island; and if, by any sudden surprise on the part of an enemy, they were to be lost, what would the noble lords opposite, what would parliament, what would the country say of any administration who should so lose them, by neglecting to maintain an adequate force for their defence? If a colony in the West or East Indies were captured from us, it might be regained; but if Malta or Gibraltar were once lost, they could never be recovered. The country had built much of its reputation and its glory upon the conquest of those possessions, and he would ask whether any minister would deserve to retain his situation, if he suffered them to be wrested from us, by omitting to provide the necessary means for their security?

But then, they were told that we were now in a state of peace, and in a state of such secure peace that no danger was to be apprehended. He admitted that fact; he admitted that the peace had every feature of security which could be desired, and he believed, also, there was some circumstances which added to that security, not arising out of the peace itself. Still, however, he was not one of those who was prepared to rest too much upon that security. He had seen too much of life, and too much of political transactions, not to know and feel how suddenly dangers might arise, and to appreciate the value of prudent precautions. As a minister of the Crown, and while he had the honour to hold that situation, he would never risk the best interests of the country by improvident economy, because no immediate and imminent danger happened to exist. He would always act upon the probability that dangers might arise, and though it might cost much in being prepared for their occurrence, yet the preparation, itself was surely worth something. He contended, that upon the whole view of the question as relating to our foreign possessions, there was no increase of force beyond what had been clearly made out by the necessity. Undoubtedly the proposed establishments would vary from year to year. He was ready to admit, that in our new colonies, which were not yet accustomed to British rule, nor assimilated to our habits and manners, it was necessary to maintain a larger force at present, than would be requisite hereafter when those causes would cease to operate. The military establishments of the country would therefore very properly become a subject of annual consideration for their lordships, when such reductions might be made, from time to time, as should seem expedient. There were other circumstances also, as to the composition of the force, which would be a fit matter for the deliberation of parliament; but as to its distribution, he maintained, that there was nothing which could with propriety be altered in the actual state of affairs. With regard to the Mediterranean, he rested his arguments upon this ground, that whatever difference of feeling might be entertained as to our commercial possessions, the garrisons of Gibraltar and Malta were points of such strength, that if once lost they could never be recovered: and they were so closely connected with the best interests of the country, that if suffered to be exposed, a heavy responsibility would attach to the administration who should run such a risk.

In adverting to the force intended to be maintained for Ireland, he should have very little to say, as there seemed to be a unanimous feeling with respect to the necessity of that force at present. No man, he would venture to say, felt more regret at the unhappy situation of the internal affairs of that country than he did; nor was there any one more anxiously desirous to adopt any remedy which might be proposed, that should seem to promise a real relief for the evils which afflicted it. If, however, there was found to prevail a difference of opinion as to what remedies were best calculated to answer the desired end, could their lordships wonder at it, when even the noble duke who had filled the high office of lord lieutenant of that country, stated to them, that fully aware as he was of one or two points which demanded some immediate and efficacious remedy, he yet confessed that, after the best consideration which he had been able to give the subject, though he felt the evils and though he felt the necessity of a remedy, he had never been able to discover what remedy would be commensurate to those evils. For himself, he could only say let the evils be pointed out, and let the remedies be suggested, and if they seemed adequate to the cure, he could assure the House that not only he, but all his colleagues, would be most anxious to give them their full effect. He was indeed far from thinking that they were to be removed by the application of a military force; but though a military force could not remove, it might at least prevent their extension and their aggravation. He should be most happy if any measure could be proposed likely to effect the required purpose. With respect to the present government of Ireland, could he say any thing more in favour of that government than to state the undeniable fact, that throughout the country there was but one sentiment of good will and attachment towards it? There never was, perhaps, an instance of the government of a great empire which ruled with so little opposition to its measures; and he felt it due to the character of his noble friend at the head of that government, and to the right hon. gentleman who discharged the official duties of the secretary to it, to make that statement. If that government did not possess the feelings and confidence of the country, it might be supposed, that by removing it a remedy would at once be found for the evils in question. But those evils had a deeper root, and the proof that they had a deeper root was to be found in the fact, that they still existed under an administration which conciliated the confidence and love of the whole people. He firmly believed, that the only real and substantial relief that could ever be afforded must arise from the increased diffusion of education among the lower classes in Ireland, and the general improvement of their morals; and when they recollected what progress had been made in another part of the British empire during the last half century in those points, he did not think they need despair of the most auspicious results to Ireland from the operation of the same causes.

He had now come to the last division of the question, relating to the amount of the home force to be employed. That amount he would fairly state to be twenty-eight thousand, including the three thousand to be kept up for reliefs. He was aware that that force, upon the mere face of the estimates, appeared excessive; but it should be remembered, that at all times, and under all circumstances, it stood to reason that as the home army must feed the foreign garrisons, it must bear a due proportion to those foreign garrisons. If that were not the case, what would be the consequence? The government, in sending out troops to distant settlements, must say to them, "You are now to go and garrison foreign colonies, not in your fair turn of duty, from which you are to be relieved at a stated period, but for life; you can never expect to return; and that is the reward which we now offer to you for all the glory and all the honour you have achieved" [Hear, hear!]. He was persuaded that no person, possessing the common feelings of justice and humanity, would wish such a course to be pursued. If, then, the principle were admitted, that a fund must be kept up at home for reliefs to our garrisons abroad, the next point to be considered was, the proportion of those reliefs. He apprehended that whoever duly considered the subject would not think it practicable to establish a system of reliefs upon a less proportion than one-tenth of the whole foreign force employed, and that proportion would be found to require about six or seven thousand men, always passing and repassing to our different possessions. That number would reduce the gross amount of the home force to 21,000; and he had already stated, that in all former periods of peace, except that of 1791, the force maintained at home had never been less than about 18,000 men, so that the real increase beyond what had usually been kept up was not more than 3000. It was to be remembered, however, that there had been a great augmentation in the number of establishments created in this country, within the last thirty or forty years, which must have some guards for their protection, and an increase of only 3000 men since that period could not surely be thought more than was absolutely necessary. Besides, there were other circumstances to be considered. The larger our force was abroad, the larger it must necessarily be at home; and that necessity affected not only the numbers, but the composition of the troops. Another point to be borne in the recollection of their lordships was, the abolition of the practice of drafting the men from one regiment to another, a most important improvement in the regulation of the army, but at the same time one which rendered an increased number of troops unavoidable, because instead of being able to fill up the skeletons of regiments, they could not now move less than a whole corps from place to place. Under such combined circumstances of necessity, was it possible that so small an increase as 3000 men could be regarded either as dangerous to the constitutional liberties of the country, or as uncalled for by the exigencies of the state? With respect to that portion of the home force, which was to be employed in the collection of the revenue, and upon which so much had been said, he only wished to remind their lordships, that if they referred to the debates upon the military establishments in the time of sir Robert Walpole, they would see it there argued, as a ground for keeping up a particular extent of force, that a part of it was so used for preventing smuggling, and to facilitate the collection of the revenue [Hear, hear!]. The practice, therefore, was not of modern date, nor could it be regarded as an innovation upon the constitution; and when it was remembered that the revenue at that time did not exceed three millions, while now it was above fourteen millions, he apprehended it would not be contended that there was a less necessity at present, than in the days of sir Robert Walpole, for so employing a part of the home force.

He had thus gone through all the principal topics embraced in the question then before their lordships, and it now remained for him only to enter his protest against the insinuation, that there existed any disposition in any quarter to alter the system of government, or to make this a military country in any improper sense of the word. Our military establishments were necessarily increased, because our possessions were increased. Whether the increase of our possessions was to be regarded as an evil or a good, was another question, which he was not now called upon to argue; but if they were to be kept at all, then a large military establishment (he meant large in reference to former ones, not in reference to the duties to be performed) was the price which must be paid for those advantages. With respect to the force intended to be kept up at home, he was justified in asserting that it was not greater now in proportion to its application, than it had been in the best days of our history. It never could be in the contemplation of any minister to make this country, in time of peace, a great military power, in an invidious sense of the word: but, on the other hand, having seen and felt all the inconveniences of establishments being reduced so low in point of numbers, and so low in point of composition, that it required considerable time, when any great emergency arose, to collect even a tolerable army for active service, it became the duty of a wise and provident administration, not to push the amount beyond a due proportion, but to take care to have the troops which were kept up of the best quality and character that could be obtained, consistently with the number, and of such a nature as might be easily augmented with advantage to the public interest. Those were the principles on which his majesty's ministers at present acted; those were the principles upon which the estimates submitted to parliament had been framed; and it was because he believed those principles founded upon a sound and legitimate policy, and because they were consonant to the best interests of the country, that he felt himself called upon to give them his decided and unqualified support.

The Duke of *Newcastle* said, he should vote against the military establishment, and in favour of the address; because, in doing so, he was satisfied he should be acting in conformity with the principles of the constitution.

The Duke of *Bedford* rose to correct an error into which the noble secretary of state for the home department had fallen, with respect to the distribution and efficiency of the forces in Ireland in 1807. If when an invasion was apprehended, as was then the case, the force had not been efficient, he should have thought him deserving of impeachment. He could confidently appeal to the noble earl, who, so much to his own honour and the advantage of Ireland, then commanded its army, if it was not in a complete state of preparation, and ready for all those duties which circumstances might call upon it to perform.

The Earl of *Roden* briefly delivered his sentiments in favour of the motion.

The Marquis of Lansdowne having shortly replied, the House divided:

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Majority against the address, 70.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, March 15.

SHOP-LIFTING BILL.] Sir *Samuel Romilly* moved the order of the day for the third reading of the shop-lifting bill. On doing so, the hon. and learned member commented with much feeling on the great number of persons, of very tender age, who had been of late years sentenced to death for pilfering in shops. He stated that there was under sentence of death in Newgate a child of ten years of age, for the offence of shop-lifting. He afterwards alluded to an account in the newspapers of a speech said to have been delivered by the recorder of London, in which, from the number of depredations on property committed of late by children, he stated that it was intended to enforce the law strictly in future, to interpose some check, if possible, to the increase of youthful depravity. He hoped that this was merely intended as a salutary threat, and that there could be no serious intention of enforcing the law against children of tender years, whose misfortune it was to be uneducated, and to be deprived of the benefit of honest and virtuous examples.

The *Attorney General* said, that his hon. and learned friend was under a great mistake as to what had been stated by his estimable friend the recorder of London. The fact was, that for the last few months a very large proportion of the malefactors brought to the bar of the Old Bailey were infants, who had been instructed by their parents to steal, under the idea that they would, on account of their age, be screened from punishment. It became, therefore, necessary that the law should be executed with respect to these children, with a more considerable degree of severity than formerly. A hint of this nature was thrown out from the bench by the learned recorder; but he could not believe, that sentence of death had actually been denounced against the next infant who should be found guilty of this petty offence. The House would, however, perceive, that in order to put a stop to this system of pilfering, a greater degree of severity was absolutely necessary to be used.

The bill was then read a third time and passed.

IRISH FARMS RECOVERY BILL.] Sir John Newport having moved the second reading of the bill "to amend the law of Ireland respecting the recovery of farms, from absconding and defaulting tenants, and for the protection of the tenant from undue distress,"

Mr. *Leslie Foster* said, as the law at present stood, the tenant was enabled to set his landlord absolutely at defiance, the law expenses for recovering possession of a tenement being in many cases much greater than its value. The law afforded, indeed, in theory, an indemnification to the landlord, by visiting on the tenant the expenses occasioned by his unwarrantable opposition; but that indemnification amounted to nothing where the tenant was possessed of no capital; and this was the case with a great proportion of the occupying tenantry of Ireland. The tenant was well informed by the village attorney how far he could advance with safety, and when he could advance no farther, he withdrew before the landlord could reach him. He was only afraid that the bill, as at present framed, would not be attended with success. It only applied to the case where a tenant abandoned his possession, but did not apply to the case where he set his landlord at defiance. Nothing was so common as for a tenant when his term of years expired, not to quit his possession, and to set his landlord at defiance. The hardship of this was most felt by the farmer who sublet part of his possession. On applying to a legal adviser, he would be told, your right is undoubted, but you will be ruined if you try an ejectment. If the present bill were to pass without a remedy for this evil, the few cases of abandonment would be all converted into overholding, so that the bill would be totally nugatory. There was a third class of cases not provided for in the bill—ejectments for non-payment of rent; when the rent was small, the grievance was of the same kind. But even if all the three cases were included in the bill, from its machinery, it could not possibly have any practical operation. There was an institution unknown in England, and peculiar to Ireland, that of assistant barristers, who determined small cases, under 20*l.* for instance, by civil bill. The usefulness of these assistant barristers had been proved by their having determined 50,000 small suits by civil bill in one year. It would be better to give the judges the power of determining the questions which would arise under the bill.

Sir *John Newport* said, the proper stage for details was the committee. The evil against which his bill intended to provide a remedy was very common in some parts of Ireland, and miles together were abandoned by the tenants in the manner which he had stated, some one person being left merely to keep possession. The defects of the remedy which he had proposed were the defects of the English law, but if a more eligible remedy could be found, he should not object. At the same time it should be kept in mind that any delay would be a most serious evil.

Mr. *Peel* hoped time would be afforded to enable the bill to be submitted to Irish lawyers, because though the provisions of the bill were according to the English law, the machinery by which that law was executed in Ireland was so different from that which existed in this country, that if the details were not attended to, the intention might be defeated.

The bill was read a second time.

MARINES SERVING IN CANADA.] Mr. *Tierney* said, he understood that there had lately been taken from Canada two battalions of marines, amounting, he believed, to 2000 men. The soldiers employed in this amphibious kind of service, were, it would be admitted, the best defenders of that colony, yet at a time when the military establishment of that colony had been increased, these marines had been disbanded, most of whom had afterwards entered into the line, and received 15*l.* a man. He therefore moved for an account of the number of men belonging to the royal marines in Canada, from the 5th of January 1815, to the 5th of January 1816.

Mr. *Croker* said, he did not object to the motion, but it would be found that the statement of the right hon. gentleman was quite erroneous. During the war in Spain, two battalions of marines had been formed, one of which was stationed in the harbour of Lisbon, and the other was employed in operations which had been of great service on the north coast of Spain. It was to be understood that they were not regimented, but merely collected together from different ships acting under the command of naval officers. When Spain was safe, and the American war began, these battalions were put on board the fleet on the American station, to be employed in desultory warfare on the coasts of the United States. When the reverses occurred in Canada, they were sent on the emergency to man the ships on the lakes, but formed no part of the general Canadian force. When the war was over, they were of course ordered home to be examined, and such as were not required for the peace establishment, to be paid off at the head quarters of their respective divisions. If this did not appear on the return to the motion of the right hon. gentleman, he would move for papers which would explain the matter.

Mr. *Tierney* said, it appeared from the hon. secretary's statement, that these men were in Canada, and that they were admirably fitted for the defence of that colony. It was not necessary to pay them off, they might have been kept as part of the peace establishment; and indeed they had not wished to be paid off. That corps had, in his opinion, been very hardly dealt with.

Mr. *Croker* said, it was not possible to keep the marines in Canada—they had no staff, no paymasters, nor were they at all constituted like regular corps. As to the charge, that the marines had been hardly dealt with, the fact was, that they had been disembodied more slowly than on any former occasion, and the quantity kept on foot had been greater by one-third than during any former peace.

Mr. *Tierney* said, he should not have said one syllable as to the disbanding of the marines, if the opposers of the army estimates had not been accused of a desire to set many brave men adrift. It was not unnatural that the marines should complain that such a difference had been made between them and the army. He wished to ask one question—whether sir Home Popham had not been appointed to a flag ship at Deptford, with all the establishment belonging to a flag ship?

Mr. *Croker* said, it had been usual during war, and during times of refits and paying off, to have a flag ship in the river. When the paying off ceased, and the refit was completed, that flag would be hauled down. To keep a flag flying till that time tended to economy, according to the opinion of all naval men; it would, however, soon be hauled down, as the sailors had come forward to enter on the peace establishment with unexampled alacrity.

Mr. *Tierney* asked, whether there had not been an additional commissioner appointed at Sheerness?

Mr. *Croker* said, there had always been two commissioners in the river, one at Sheerness, and another who did the duty of Woolwich and Deptford.

Mr. *Wynn* disapproved of the reduction of the marines in Canada, and said he should be willing to see this species of force extended, if there was a correspondent reduction in the army.

The motion was agreed to.

PRINCE REGENT'S MESSAGE RESPECTING A PROVISION FOR PRINCESS CHARLOTTE AND PRINCE OF COBOURG.] The order of the day for a committee on the Prince Regent's Message having been read, and the House having resolved itself into the committee,

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* rose and said, that as he had observed the unanimous feeling which had prevailed in the House when the message had been submitted to the House, he anticipated no difference of opinion as to what would be a suitable provision for her royal highness the Princess Charlotte, and her intended husband. The object of the House would unanimously be to provide every means for the domestic comfort and splendour of the illustrious personages, paying at the same time that due attention to economy and moderation, which at this, and indeed at all times, was the duty of parliament. To attain these ends, he should in the first place propose such an annual allowance, as might be thought proper for these exalted characters, and at some time hereafter, in a committee of supply, he should move that such immediate assistance should be given, as would enable them, without encumbering their income with debts, to form their domestic arrangements. The annual sum which he should propose was 60,000*l.* a year, of which 10,000*l.* would form a sort of privy purse for her royal highness and the remainder would defray the domestic expenses of the Prince of Cobourg's establishment. This sum, he should propose to grant to these illustrious personages during their joint lives. The uncertainty of human affairs made it necessary to guard against an event, which it could not but be painful to contemplate. If the prince of Cobourg should die before his royal consort, the whole sum would be continued to her royal highness during her life. If, however, the prince of Cobourg should survive her royal highness, the sum of 50,000*l.* a year would be continued to him, being the whole of the allowance now proposed to be granted, deducting only the 10,000*l.* which formed the privy purse of the princess. It was intended that the allowance to the princess from the civil list should cease, which would be a saving to the public of 30,000*l.* a year, as would be seen by referring to the account. With respect to the vote for outfit, which he should hereafter propose, the House would feel that a just economy in life depended on a suitable establishment at the outfit. How many inconveniencies arose from debts and incumbrances at first, which drew on a system of procrastinating payments which could not be afterwards got rid of, and prevented the recurrence to an orderly system of expenditure. He should, therefore, propose a vote for outfit to the illustrious personages, equal to one year's expenditure. Out of this sum it was calculated that 40,000*l.* would defray the expense of furniture, plate, equipages, and wine; 10,000*l.* would be expended in articles of dress for the princess; and 10,000*l.* to increase her royal highness's jewels. This vote of 60,000*l.* for outfit, though he should not then propose it, he had thought it proper to mention, that the House might have the whole subject under their view. The House, he thought, would be convinced that the proposal was, on the whole, temperate and judicious. He had only to mention one other point for the attention of the House. Hitherto it had not been possible to fix on a residence for the reception of her royal highness and her consort. When that was determined on, it might possibly be necessary to apply to the House for further aid; and he had no doubt that proposition would be received with the same affectionate and loyal attention with which the House received the present proposition. The right hon. gentleman concluded with moving,

"That it is the opinion of this committee, that his majesty be enabled to grant a yearly sum or sums of money out of the consolidated fund of Great Britain, not exceeding in the whole the nett sum of 60,000*l.* in order to provide for the establishment of her royal highness the Princess Charlotte Augusta and his serene highness Leopold George Frederick prince of Cobourg of Saalfeld, &c. &c. &c. upon their marriage, to commence from the day of their marriage, and to continue during the life of her said royal highness; and that his majesty be also enabled to settle the nett sum of 50,000*l.* per annum, part of the said sum of 60,000*l.* on his said serene highness, in case he shall survive her said royal highness."

Mr. *Tierney* expressed his concurrence with the motion, and his hope, that as the salary proposed was so ample, no excess would hereafter accrue; but that, on the contrary, the expenditure would be such as to hold out a favourable prospect to the country as to the disposition of the parties. With regard to the House, he saw no reason why Cumberland House, which was at present the ordnance office in Pall-mall, should not be appropriated to the accommodation of the princess Charlotte and her consort, especially as that house could not in time of peace be necessary for the purposes of the ordnance department. This House being in Pall-mall, was peculiarly suitable for those illustrious personages, and unless the principal clerks of the establishment were very tenacious of their apartments, he could not see why this splendid mansion should not be transferred to the use of the princess Charlotte, especially as all the business of the ordnance office in time of peace might be so easily transacted at the Tower. With regard to the grant of 50,000*l.* a year to the prince, in case his royal highness should survive the princess, he had no objection to it. It was extremely liberal, and he was glad it was so. From all he had heard of his serene highness, he was ready to give him full credit for the best intentions. He repeated his entire approbation of the provision proposed. It was liberal but not extravagant, and such as it became those illustrious personages to receive, and the country to bestow.

Mr. *Robert Ward* explained, that the ordnance office was not the property of the Crown, as the right hon. gentleman seemed to have supposed. Only the mechanical part of the office was transacted at the Tower; and much inconvenience would result both to the service and to the public, were the ordnance to be removed from the neighbourhood of the other offices.

Mr. *Tierney* said, that a few years ago there was a long slip of building near St. Margaret's church, which was found sufficient for the ordnance office. This had been pulled down on account of the Westminster improvements. Cumberland house, formerly the residence of the royal duke, afterwards belonged to a club, and had since been purchased by government, to whom it now belonged. To make it the residence of the princess and her husband would be eligible, and would be a saving now of the sum it cost. Some other convenient place might be easily found for the ordnance board.

Mr. *Fremantle* approved most cordially of the intended marriage, which, from his knowledge of the character of the princess Charlotte, would, he had no doubt, be productive of mutual felicity to the parties; and he preferred a liberal grant at the outset, which he trusted would be justly applied, to any allowance upon a limited scale, which might render future application to parliament necessary.

Mr. *Brougham* wished to give his feeble testimony in favour of the proposed plan. There was no worse economy than that which would attempt to do too much. If a smaller annual allowance had been granted, and a smaller sum as an outfit, there might have been a renewal of those scenes which had disgusted the House and the country; of those applications for the payment of debts, which, though incurred, perhaps, at first, through the want of an adequate establishment, had since proceeded from a different source. He approved most sincerely of the intended establishment; though some doubt had risen in his mind respecting the propriety of continuing 50,000*l.* a year to the prince of Cobourg, in case of her royal highness's demise, as that far exceeded what was given to our own princes. But on considering, after having been placed so high, the mortification which his serene highness would have to encounter on descending to a lower income, he felt that doubt nearly removed. The allowance was liberal, but he hoped it would be spent in this country. There was but one feeling in the House and in the country on that subject; and as her royal highness, though sole apparent heiress to the Crown, was likely to come into the situation of any other woman having a husband, and to be in the power of that husband, he trusted the House would be attentive to secure the rights of that royal person, and the order of succession, by taking all the measures necessary for that purpose. He had no idea of limiting the residence of her royal highness to any place beyond her own wish. If at any time she should desire to visit foreign countries, more intimately connected with her husband, he did not mean to raise any impediment; but to place in her hands, by act of parliament, the power of continuing in this country, if such was her good pleasure, notwithstanding her coverture. There was another point to which he would direct the attention of the House. They had now, with a degree of unanimity which did them honour, and which could not fail to prove gratifying to the illustrious parties, approved the liberal establishment proposed for that distinguished branch of the royal family. He should now suggest the propriety of availing themselves of this unanimity, of this complete silence of party feelings, and taking into consideration an arrangement which had once before been proposed to the House, and had then been rejected. But party spirit was then raging in greater violence. He meant an arrangement in case an event should take place, of which, however painful the contemplation, the possibility must be admitted; the death, or the incapacity of the Prince Regent to exercise the functions of royalty. No arrangement now existed in the contemplation of such an event. It had been suggested, at the period to which he had alluded, to establish a permanent regency; but parliament had been pleased to form a temporary one. What could not be effected in the storm of passions, loosened in 1810, might now be coolly and judiciously attempted. The fatal event which might render such an arrangement afterwards necessary, was now, he trusted, remote, and the discussion would therefore be carried on with more temper and wisdom, than if the necessities of the case called at once upon the House to interfere. He had taken this opportunity to throw out these observations for the consideration of parliament. No man felt more sincere respect for the illustrious parties, or should deprecate more deeply any admixture of party feeling in the vote of this night.

Lord *Castlereagh* gave credit to the hon. and learned gentleman for not wishing to introduce party feelings into the discussion, at a time when all were disposed to show their anxiety for the happiness of the illustrious couple. Yet he must think that the hon. and learned member had mixed something in the question which did not belong to it. The supposition of incapacity in the Prince Regent was not a subject for discussion at this period; and with respect to the point of residence, he was not lawyer enough to know whether it would be possible to force her royal highness out of the country, but he deprecated the creating a notion in the public mind, that there might be a wish in some quarter to fix the residence of her royal highness in some other country. If the hon. and learned member had given way to any such alarms, he would gladly dispel them, by assuring him that they were totally groundless; he assured him from his own knowledge, that there was the most perfect understanding as to the right of residence between the parties interested, and that a distinct record of the fact had taken place in the marriage settlements of her royal highness. He hoped he had now relieved him from his alarm. As to the question of regency, this was not the time for its discussion, and with respect to the allowance to the prince of Cobourg, in case of her royal highness's demise, it was liberal, but to act differently would have been harsh towards an individual, whose coming he was sure the country was disposed to hail with satisfaction.

Mr. *Brougham* was sorry that the noble lord should suppose he wished to mix useless questions with the present. It was certainly not likely that the illustrious person alluded to, should feel the want of such protection as he had suggested, but it was the duty of the House to look at and provide for the possibility of the case. He was glad that a clause had been inserted in the marriage settlements, but an act of parliament embodying that stipulation could alone give it force. He concluded by calling upon the noble lord to state, whether an arrangement of that nature had not been proposed in the negociations which had taken place on a similar subject in 1814?

Mr. *Barclay* inquired, how a saving of 30,000*l.* would be produced on the civil list by the proposed arrangement?

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* stated, that the regular income of her royal highness the princess Charlotte was 15,000*l.*, but there were other expenses connected with her establishment, which would make up the saving about 30,000*l.*

Lord *Castlereagh* explained, that this sum included the expenses of the attendants on her royal highness, her ladies, and the persons who contributed to her education.

Mr. *Wynn* approved of the establishment proposed; but as it was formed on nearly the same footing as that of an heir apparent to the Crown, he wished, as long as her royal highness should continue in that light, she should be placed under the same regulations as the heir apparent was by the law of the land.

Lord *Castlereagh* said, that her royal highness was in no case to leave the country without her own consent, and the permission of the King in council.

The resolution was agreed to.

Army Estimates.] On the bringing up of the report of the committee of supply,

Sir *John Newport* called the attention of the House to the proposed military establishment for India, of which, he observed, although it was stated that the India company were to defray the expenses, he was satisfied the burthen would ultimately fall upon the British public. In looking to the number of men intended to be thus employed, he thought it was far too numerous, when it was considered that the means of annoyance, both internal and external, in that territory, had been considerably decreased.

Mr. *Wallace* stated, that the expense of that establishment was supported by the East India company, and that the effective force was not so considerable as the nominal one given in the estimates. He urged the necessity of maintaining a respectable army, even in time of peace, in a country where there was only one European to 1,000 natives. He regretted that the right hon. baronet had selected this year, when we could hardly say that we were at peace in India; the rajah of Nepaul being the richest chief in that country, and the forces of Scindiah and Holkar being also in great power. There was also a new predatory power which had arisen, the Pindarrahs, who had a force of 30,000 or 40,000 men; these were inclined to join with the Mahrattas; and, under all the circumstances, it was highly necessary that we should always be prepared to repel their incursions.

Sir *John Newport* said, the statement he had heard of the intermediate condition of India between peace and war, removed much of his objection to the resolution; but he should extremely regret placing a great force under any officer, which might afford a temptation to increase our territories in that quarter.

Mr. *T. Courtenay* said, that as soon as the war in India had come to a conclusion, the military force there, according to orders already sent out, would be reduced.

Mr. *Calcraft* was not at all satisfied with the vote proposed. He had heard nothing which could induce him to think that the establishment was not too large. The cavalry intended to be maintained at home was also, in his opinion, infinitely too large for the purposes alleged, which were principally those of collecting the revenue. He repeated many of the arguments formerly used, to show the necessity of reducing the waggon train and other corps. The reduction in the whole establishment, to the amount of 23,000 men, might, he was satisfied, be made without any detriment to the public service.

Sir *Gilbert Heathcote* observed, that the treaties which had been concluded, and which ought to confirm the peace, seemed only to intimate war and eternal taxation. When Buonaparté was on the throne of France, we were told that peace with him was useless or impossible, and could amount to no more than an armed truce. We had now obtained a glorious peace—we had placed a sovereign of our own choice upon the throne and yet, from the enormous military establishment now proposed, it would seem we were still insecure. But never was Great Britain in less danger of attack, though, it appeared, an obstinate extravagance was to prove an obstruction to that diminution of expenditure which could alone save us from ruin. After some remarks on our insular situation and policy, which precluded danger from any continental armies, the hon. baronet proceeded to show that the peace establishment was inconsistent with the promises held out by the voluminous mass of treaties on the table; and that those treaties, in many instances, particularly in what related to Belgium and Russia, were not deserving of the panegyrics that had been bestowed on them. However, he could not see why we were saddled with an enormous establishment and consequent taxation for an indefinite period, or, to use a fashionable term, for an intermediate space. In order that it might not be said he wished to inflame the minds of the people, or to gain any unworthy popularity, which of all men he affected the least, he had forborne to touch on the distress of the country, though he knew but too many instances of it. He could not help believing that the large army was kept up for the support of institutions which were incompatible with the increasing knowledge and education of the people. The noble lord opposite might wish to see things go on exactly in their present state, while he (sir Gilbert) might wish to see a progressive increase of liberty, as far as was consistent with the rules of propriety and good government; but he hoped he should not be deemed factious for this: innovators and improvers had, but too often, been esteemed but mere rebels against the existing powers and order of things; and the fate of Galileo was an awful warning of the precipitate injustice which generally assailed the greatest benefactors of society. He did not mean to support all the extravagancies of the French revolution; but there was a spirit of rational liberty that never could be extinguished; no dungeons could stifle the voice of truth—no chains could subdue the spirit of honest freedom. He firmly believed, that the military establishment was designed to stifle public opinion; but he was convinced the event would show the attempt to be impracticable; not only here, but all over the world. As he had had no other opportunity, he had taken the present to express his decided disapprobation of the establishment that had been proposed.

Lord *Palmerston* took that opportunity of explaining the circumstance which had been alluded to on a former evening, of the transports that were lost on the coast of Ireland. The accident was quite unavoidable, and owing to the unfavourable state of the weather, together with the long nights, which greatly increased the danger of the navigation. The vessels employed were as good as any in the service, and no blame whatever could attach to the transport board. With respect to the loss in the transportation of horses from Calais, he had to state, that the number embarked was 5,376, and the loss was but 130. The men embarked were 6,000, of whom only two soldiers were drowned, owing to accident, arising from the eagerness of the men to get on shore. From this it might be inferred, that vessels of an improper description had not been used.

The report was agreed to. The Chancellor of the Exchequer then moved the orders of the day for the House resolving into a committee of supply.

Mr. *Wynn* suggested the expediency of postponing the remaining estimates, connected with the military service, to a future day.

Lord *Palmerston* thought, as another opportunity would occur for discussing the subject, and as the estimates had already occupied so much attention, it would be prudent to go on now.

Mr. *Tierney* said, that he saw no necessity for continuing the discussions on this subject further. He, as well as gentlemen on his side of the House, had taken every pains to prevent the estimates, which had been agreed to, from passing, but without being able to effect the alteration of a single farthing in their original amount. His majesty's ministers had succeeded in spite of all opposition, and in defiance of the sense of the House and the country, in imposing on the people a military establishment of 111,000 men in a time of peace. After this he thought it was an insult on the country to congratulate the noble lord on having made a secure and lasting peace.

Lord *Castlereagh* contended, that there was no instance in the history of this country of any military establishment having undergone so long a discussion. This was the tenth night on which it had been discussed; and he would affirm that never had any discussion produced more general conviction [Hear, hear!], and this conviction was, that the establishment was wise, fit, and becoming. He would further say, that the same conviction that had operated on the mind of the House had been brought home to the minds of the people; and in causing their conviction, ministers had pursued the upright line of their duty, in defiance of all the obloquy that had been heaped upon them. The people, therefore, who were always inclined to hear reason, would do them justice, and give them their confidence.

Mr. *Tierney* said, he would only wish the question to be tried by the ordinary appeal to the sense of the people, namely, by a dissolution of parliament. Gentlemen on his side of the House had done all they could, by moving calls of the House, to obtain the attendance of members on this important occasion; but the noble lord well knew that they had failed in their object, and that the people had been saddled with this enormous establishment, when not more than one-third of the members of the House had voted for it.

Mr. *Lyttelton* said, he would not suffer any vote to pass without raising his voice against this improvident and unfortunate military establishment. It was not a little in contradiction to the noble lord's assumption of the general feeling being with him, that a considerable portion of those who usually voted with ministers, about 60 or 70, had displayed their good sense by voting against this measure.

The House having resolved itself into the committee of supply, on lord Palmerston's moving, "That 1,234,596*l.* 13*s.* 6*d.* be granted for defraying the charge of the forces stationed in France,"

Mr. *Tierney* took occasion to ask how the money to be paid by France was to be managed—by what authority was it placed in the military chest—and by what authority taken out?

Lord *Castlereagh* replied, that the money to be advanced by France was droits of the Crown, and paid by its authority into the military chest, for the use of the army.

Mr. *Tierney* said, that it was a most monstrous proposition, that this sum which the exertions of the country, at a vast expense, compelled France to pay, should be considered the exclusive property of the Crown, and independent of the control of the House. A more important question could not come before parliament.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer*, while he asserted those sums to be droits of the Crown, had no objection to account for the application of them to the House. They were subject to the same prerogative as ships taken from the enemy after the declaration of hostilities.

Mr. *Brougham* reprobated the principle.

Mr. *Tierney* acknowledged most fully the services of the army, and thought them deserving the highest reward; but this reward they should be accustomed to receive from parliament alone.

Lord *Castlereagh* said, that the money paid by France would be as regularly accounted for to the House, as if it had been issued from the treasury of England. The country would thereby obtain every security that could be afforded by accounts. The donation made to the army was not by the Crown alone, but by all the allied sovereigns.

Mr. *Brougham* apprehended the most serious danger from having the British army paid by foreign powers. The army should look to parliament alone as its paymaster, and while it did so, the Crown might be intrusted with its services. He expressed his hope, that this circumstance, so alarming in a constitutional point of view, would be brought under the distinct consideration of the House.

Lord *Castlereagh* said, that the hon. and learned gentleman might bring the question to issue as soon as he pleased. The House should however remember, that the donation was given to the army by the consent of the Crown; and, in pursuance of a treaty, which parliament had since ratified. He allowed it to be a monstrous principle, that our army should receive any pay from foreign powers; but it must likewise be acknowledged as equally monstrous for the House to divert to any other purpose, money which by treaty had been appropriated to the army.

Lord *Milton*, on constitutional grounds, objected to the principle of suffering our army to look to any other power than the Crown for prize, or to the parliament for pay. If the Crown were now desirous of reverting to the ancient prerogative, he trusted that it would likewise again submit to its ancient burthens.

Sir *M. W. Ridley* begged leave to speak of a circumstance which did not refer to the present question. In the last session, 800,000*l.* had been voted to the army of the peninsula, serving under the duke of Wellington. But another army, equally meritorious, was totally overlooked —he meant the army that fought at Barrossa under sir Thomas Graham.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that the money was voted as a compensation for spoils captured from the enemy, and if the army of Barrossa had been equally fortunate in its captures, it would have been equally remunerated.

The resolution was agreed to.

MARRIAGE OF THE PRINCESS CHARLOTTE.] The chancellor of the exchequer, in the committee of supply, moved, "That a sum, not exceeding 60,000*l.* nett, be granted to his majesty, for defraying the expense of making preparations for the marriage of her royal highness the Princess Charlotte Augusta with his serene highness Leopold George Frederick Prince of Cobourg of Saalfeld, &c. &c. &c."

Mr. *Fremantle* had no objection to the sum, but wished to know whether it would be vested in trustees, or what security the public would have for its being fairly applied; not that he could have any doubt of the parties concerned, but it was necessary that the country should have some security, and it would be satisfactory to the feelings of the royal individuals themselves.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that, no doubt, the first officer whom the illustrious persons whose interests were concerned in this vote would appoint, would be a treasurer to whom this sum, as well as the quarterly payments of the annual allowance, would be paid.

Mr. *Tierney* said, he thought 40,000*l.* not a fraction too much for the outfit, as it had been called, of the illustrious individuals alluded to. With respect, however, to the plate and jewels, in the purchase of which the remaining 20,000*l.* was to be applied, he could not help remarking that these things might have been expected from another quarter. If they were not obtained in this way, he did not think 20,000*l.* an unreasonable sum for their purchase. As to the security for the proper application of these sums, he was sure none was necessary, as from all he had heard of prince Cobourg, he was convinced no man could apply it more faithfully to the purposes intended than he would.

Mr. *Fremantle* did not mean to insinuate the possibility of a doubt as to the high honour of the illustrious prince in question. His object in making the inquiry was merely for information.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* never understood the hon. gentleman to question the honourable feelings of his serene highness.

Mr. *Tierney* again suggested the impropriety of the ordnance department occupying so large a house as that which they did in Pall Mall—a house which had been the residence for many years of the duke and duchess of Cumberland, and which, if taken as the residence of the illustrious persons for whom provision was now making, might save the country a considerable expense. The value of the House was not less than 30,000*l.* and the department might be accommodated at a much less expense.

Mr. *R. Ward* said, there were four branches of the ordnance in the building in question. With respect to the application of the House to the purpose intended, he begged to suggest whether it was not necessary to consult the feelings of the illustrious persons before any arrangement could even be hinted at. Respecting their residence, the discussion of the question now was premature.

Mr. *Tierney* did not mean to enter into any discussion of the point, but merely to throw out a suggestion, so that it might not be said hereafter, "he should have spoken sooner."

Sir *M. W. Ridley* did not think the occasion an improper one for introducing this subject.

The question was then carried *nem. con.* amidst loud cheers.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, March 18.

Petitions against the Property Tax.] Petitions respecting the Property Tax were presesented from Guildford, Callington, Aberdeen, Godalming, Worcester, Thornbury, Lanark, Hungerford, Stafford, St. Alban's, Plomesgate, Pontesbury, Coningsby, the county of Kent, Rochester, Chatham, Henley-upon-Thames, the county of Sussex, Southampton, the county of Berks, Newbury, Kircudbright, Market-Deeping, Louth, Spilsby, county of Lincoln, Sheffield, Morpeth, county of York, county of Perth, and from the merchants and traders of the metropolis.

Mr. Serjeant *Onslow,* on presenting the petition from the corporation and inhabitants of Guildford, praying in very strong terms, that the income tax might not be renewed, said, he should certainly support the petition, and that he was desired by the member for Bridport, who was the recorder of Guildford, to express his concurrence in the prayer of the petition.

Mr. *Tremayne* said, it was the opinion of some of his constituents in the county of Cornwall, that a modified tax upon property, bearing equally upon all classes of the community, would be an equitable tax. He had a petition to this effect. If this mode were adopted, the government might dispense with the war malt tax, which pressed hard upon the poor.

The *Attorney General* stated, that although he had on a former evening presented a petition from his constituents at Eye against this tax, he was yet of opinion that, under the present circumstances of the country, a modified property tax, for a time to be limited, was the best mode of raising the sums wanted for the state. This was his conviction, and he regretted that it was at variance with the opinions of his constituents.

Mr. *Methuen* hoped that no member would act under the impression, that by voting for the property tax, he had any chance of getting rid of the war malt tax. The government had not held out any such hopes.

Mr. *Abercrombie* presented a petition from Godalming, against any renewal of the income tax. He said, in consequence of the county members declaring their intention to support the tax, this petition had not been entrusted to them to present to the House.

Sir *H. Neale* stated, that he had authority from the mayor and burgesses of Lymington, to disclaim on their part any participation in the petition against the property tax, which had been transmitted from that town. The hon. baronet concluded by presenting a petition to that effect from the individuals in question.

Lord *Folkestone* said, that this paper had more the appearance of a statement than a petition.

The *Speaker* observed, that the House was not in the habit of being very scrupulous as to the form of a petition. The petitioners in this case only prayed not to be included in the number of those who constructed a former instrument.

Sir *H. Neale* said, that they wished to disclaim any connexion with the petition couched in the intemperate language of the former one.

Lord *Elmley* presented a petition from a number of persons in the county of Worcester, expressing their opinion in favour of an equally regulated tax on property.

Mr. *Lyttelton* said, that this petition, which virtually prayed for a continuance of the tax, did not represent the sense of the county. It was proposed for adoption at a late hour of the day, and without notice. In proof of its being signed by a very small number of his constituents, he adduced the fact that it only contained the signatures of two magistrates. The sense of the county, as would be seen by a petition which would be presented in the course of the evening, was entirely against the tax.

Lord *Elmley* replied, that the petition had been carried by a show of hands in the usual manner.

Mr. *Lyttelton* rejoined, that it was of little consequence how it had been carried, when no public notice of the meeting was given.

Sir *W. Geary* presented a petition from the county of Kent against any renewal of the property tax, and the maintenance of large standing armies in time of peace.

The hon. baronet stated that, although some opposition had been made, the petition was carried, with the exception of six or seven persons at the utmost, with the most perfect unanimity; and he had only to add, that he fully concurred with every part of it.

Mr. *Rose* had to present a petition from certain persons at Southampton, against the property tax. This was the petition which he had on a former night alluded to. It came to him by the mail coach that morning, without any accompanying communication. He knew nothing about it or the promoters of it, and he would not by making any further observations on the subject, afford room for that sort of discussion which he was sorry to see embraced with so much eagerness by gentlemen opposite.

When the petition was opened by the clerk, a piece of loose parchment fell from it on the table.

The *Speaker* observed, that the House could not receive the dissevered part of a document like this.

Mr. *Rose* stated, that it had reached him in that state. The separate part, he believed, contained signatures which it was intended to attach to those at the end of the petition.

Mr. *Baring* said, the question was, not in what manner it reached the right hon. gentleman, but whether it was within the orders of the House.

Mr. *Peter Moore* said, they ought to be indulgent towards a petition for which a reward of twenty guineas had been offered by the right hon. gentleman who presented it. They ought to be glad to have discovered the stolen petition on any terms.

Mr. *Rose* said, that the petition contained, as he had before stated, about thirty or forty respectable names, together with a great many others, who were either paupers or non-residents of the town.

Mr. *Baring* said, the present petition evidently showed that the people of Southampton felt in common with the rest of the country on the question of this tax. When the right hon. gentleman had last spoken, he asserted that the people of Southampton were favourable to the tax. He had spoken of the present petition as emanating from paupers, &c. It appeared of such a character, that he shrunk with horror from its presentation. He (Mr. Baring) was, however, at last glad to hear, that it had some respectable signatures; and the best proof of its containing the sentiments of the people of Southampton was, that the efforts of the right hon. gentleman opposite (if indeed he made any) had failed in procuring a counter-petition.

Mr. *Rose* repeated what he had said on a former occasion relative to this petition, but he denied having uttered a syllable from which it could be inferred that the people of Southampton were favourable to the property tax. He also denied that he had directly or indirectly interfered in the matter. He had never written a line to any person to promote either this petition or a counter one. He would again assert, that the great mass of those who signed the petition were unknown at Southampton. Some of them had never paid the property tax, or, indeed, any other in their lives.

Mr. *C. Dundas* presented a petition from Berkshire against the property tax, at the same time expressing himself inimical to the intention of government respecting its renewal. The people had borne it without complaint during the war, admitting the necessity for heavy taxation to maintain the arduous struggle in which the country was engaged, but confidently looking forward to its termination to afford relief from the pressure of this tax in particular.

Mr. *Neville* said, that as one of the representatives of Berkshire, he felt it his duty to bear testimony to the general feeling which prevailed in that county, as well as others, against the property tax. The noble lord (Castlereagh) who was not then in his place, might, indeed, assert, that this feeling sprung from an ignorant impatience for a relaxation of taxes—he might assert that it was created by clamour, a clamour which existed only in his imagination. The fact was, the feeling of the people sprung from an honest indignation at the evasion that had been practised upon them. He would oppose the tax in every stage, from a conviction of its injustice, and also from a firm persuasion that any tax of this kind, in a time of profound peace, was wholly unjustifiable.

Mr. *William Douglas* rose to put a question to an hon. and learned gentleman, whom he now saw in his place. He desired to know upon what authority that hon. and learned gentleman had ventured to insinuate, that his constituents were indisposed to commit their petitions to his charge. He valued his independence as highly as any member of the House, and was prepared to defend it against the hon. gentleman, either there or elsewhere.

Mr. *Brougham* said, the House had nothing to do with the hon. gentleman's intentions elsewhere. With respect to what had fallen from him on a former occasion, he had certainly observed, that it was somewhat extraordinary that the five boroughs represented by the hon. gentleman should have sent their petitions to the House through the medium of his (Mr. B.'s) presentation. This, he had considered, was only to be accounted for by some known difference of opinion on the subject of the income tax between the hon. gentleman and his constituents. Upon this supposition the conduct of the petitioners was quite natural; and he should therefore retain his opinion, until he saw reason to believe that the conjectures as to the hon. gentleman's views with regard to the property tax were unfounded.

Mr. *W. Douglas* conceived that the hon. gentleman ought in common courtesy to have apprized him of his having received these petitions, before he presented them to the House, accompanied by observations of this nature.

Mr. *Brougham* believed the courtesy described by the hon. gentleman to be quite unusual in the pratice of receiving and presenting petitions to the House.

Mr. *Pelham* presented petitions from Louth, Market-Deeping, Spilsby, and the county of Lincoln against the property tax, the military establishments, and the profusion in every department.

Sir *Robert Heron*, adverting to an observation of the noble lord (Castlereagh), that the protracted debates upon the military estimates had served to convince the country of the necessity of the proposed establishment, expressed a wish that the noble lord had been present at the meeting of the county of Lincoln on Friday last, and he would have been satisfied of the inaccuracy of his information. For at that meeting, which was by far the most unanimous and respectable he had ever witnessed in the Castle Yard of Lincoln, excepting only the case of a particular contested election, the sentiments of the county was decidedly opposite to the noble lord's observation. He would not, however, state that the meeting was unanimous in favour of the petition, for five gentlemen had spoken against it. But yet upon a show of hands, the assent to the petition was so universal, that no one, not even among those five dissentients, attempted to call for a division. The petition, however, was only signed by 600 persons, but this was owing to circumstances which he thought it necessary to explain. It was expected that the sheriff would have signed the petition on the part of the meeting, but that officer having refused to do so, it became necessary to apply for individual signatures. The petition, however, having been left at the town-hall, which was a small room with but one entrance, only a few persons could find admittance to sign the petition in due time, for that dispatch to which it was necessary, for obvious reasons, to attend. But such was the eager pressure of the people, that he was assured that several yeoman and farmers stood in the rain three or four hours, to wait the opportunity of signing their names. This he felt it necessary to state, in order that the House should not form an opinion of the feeling of this country from the comparatively few names annexed to the petition. The property tax was, in fact, universally unpopular in Lincolnshire, and it was also the general opinion in that county, that the war tax upon malt ought to be repealed. Indeed, the hostility to this tax was nearly equal to that against the continuance of the property tax. By the repeal of the malt war tax it was conceived that two important benefits would arise; namely, that agriculture would be served by the increased consumption of barley, and that the agricultural labourers would be enabled to purchase that beverage of which, of late years, they had scarcely a taste. Upon the merit of this calculation, he felt that he was not a competent judge, but he conceived it his duty to represent the opinion of a meeting at which he had the honour to attend.

Mr. *Chaplin* said, that he differed on some points from the hon. baronet. That the meeting at Lincoln was numerous he was ready to admit, but then it was proper to allude to the expedients employed to augment that meeting, especially by an hon. baronet who had a large property in that county. It was a fact, that a clergyman in that county, acted upon by influence which was not unknown, had taken all his parishioners to the meeting, as if he were proceeding to a county election. He had also to state, that the noble lord (Castlereagh) need not, from any thing that took place at this meeting, or that was thought in Lincolnshire, feel much alarm about the accuracy of his observation with regard to the proposed military establishment; and he could add, that the people of that county did not object strongly to the continuance of the war tax upon malt.

Mr. *D. Burrell* spoke in favour of the petition, and bore testimony to the universal feeling of Lincolnshire against the property tax, and the proposed military establishment.

Mr. *Pelham* followed on the same side, and maintained that the sentiments expressed in the petition were those of the county at large.

Sir *Gilbert Heathcote* said, that understanding some remarks from the hon. member for Lincolnshire were pointed particularly at him, he desired to know whether gentlemen who had property in a particular district were precluded by law, or should abstain in justice, from using their influence to second the wishes and promote the interests of the people. It was not surely pretended, that ministers hesitated to employ any influence in their power to advance their views. The hon. member was probably enabled to speak to that question; and why, then, should gentlemen who felt for the distresses of the country be inactive, while the baneful influence of the government was in active exertion. If, as the hon. gentleman had stated, a clergyman of Lincolnshire had been so active on this occasion, that clergyman was eminently entitled to praise for his public spirit, and he could not help expressing a wish that the generality of churchmen were equally meritorious. The hon. baronet said, he had not himself attended the meeting of Lincolnshire, from motives of delicacy, because he had been for eleven years a representative for that county, and from the same cause he had declined signing the requisition. But still he felt it his duty to support the opinion of that county, as he ever strenuously should the sentiments of his countrymen. This course, indeed, he was resolved uniformly to pursue, without any view to personal interest; for he sought neither power nor profit from his public conduct; on the contrary, he declared that the possession of the mines of Peru should not induce him to connect himself with administration.

Sir *Robert Heron* declared, that he could not conceal his surprise at the statement which the House had heard from the hon. member for Lincolnshire; but when he considered the answer which the petition itself afforded to that statement, he could not view it without uneasiness. The hon. member had ventured to assert, that the people of Lincolnshire were not anxious for the repeal of the war tax on malt, or averse to the proposed military establishment; but to refute that assertion, he would refer the hon. member and the House to the words of the petition, and after that reference, he thought no one could be surprised at any thing which fell from that hon. member [Hear, hear!]. With respect to the meeting at Lincoln, or the means used, as the hon. member stated, to influence that meeting, he (sir R. H.) would ask, whether means, the most gross and scandalous were not employed to produce an undue impression upon that meeting? For instance, one gentleman took the liberty of ascribing to him (sir R. H.) something little short of forgery, for putting names to the requisition which he was not fully authorized to do by the hand-writing of the gentleman alluded to. Those indeed who knew him, could not, he presumed, suppose that he would make use of the name of any person if not duly authorized.

Sir *Charles Monk* stated, that having property in Lincolnshire, he had thought proper to sign the requisition for the meeting with which the petition originated.

Lord *George Cavendish* said, that he had authorised the hon. baronet to include his name among those who required the sheriff to convene the meeting alluded to.

Sir *Robert Heron* observed, that not a single name appeared in the requisition which was not duly authorized.

Mr. *Atherley* presented a petition from Southampton against the property tax, which he said was not signed by paupers and children, as had been asserted of a former petition which was stolen, but by respectable inhabitants.

Lord *Folkestone* stated, that this petition had been proposed under every disadvantage, and yet in the short space of six hours, from four o'clock till ten, it received 430 signatures, notwithstanding the rain fell in torrents all the time. He said, that during the time it lay for signatures, a person meanly dressed, presented himself in the room to sign it. The gentlemen who were there, recollecting the aspersion which had been cast upon the former petition, asked him whether he knew any thing about the property tax, or whether he paid towards it? He replied yes, for he rented a house which paid the property tax, and his rent had been raised by the landlord, in order to meet the property tax. He knew if the tax was taken off, that his rent would be reduced in proportion. Lord F. said, he mentioned this circumstance merely to prove, in opposition to what had been advanced by the right hon. gentleman opposite (Mr. Rose), that those who did not pay directly to the property tax, yet paid indirectly to it.

Lord *Lascelles* presented a petition from the town of Sheffield, which he had received that morning by the coach. It was in favour of the property tax. The meeting, he understood, had not been regularly convened, as was the case with the former petition, but in the course of two days, during which it was drawn up and left for signatures, it was signed by upwards of eleven hundred persons. Had there been sufficient time, the signatures would have been more numerous, but they were anxious to have it presented that day. The petitioners stated, that they believed the renewal of the property tax to be the best measure that could be resorted to, under all the circumstances of the country; but at the same time they relied on the wisdom of that House for carrying into effect such retrenchments as might be consistent with a due regard to the national honour and prosperity.

Lord *Milton* said, that he had had the honour of presenting a petition to the House some days since, from Sheffield, which emanated from a meeting regularly convened, and which had been signed by a great number of the most respectable inhabitants. By whom the present one was signed he knew not, but he wished to call the attention of the House to one circumstance connected with it. No public meeting whatever was called, but instead of that, the public crier went through the town to give notice that such a petition was lying for signatures, and he had a large printed placard, stating, that the inhabitants of Sheffield were required to attend at the Town-hall, to sign a petition for the purpose of compelling their representatives to pay, and not to have all the burthens saddled upon the poor. That was the way in which the petition had been obtained, and he thought it his duty to state the fact to the House.

Lord *Lascelles* said, he knew nothing as to the mode of proceeding which had been adopted. The petition was sent to him from Sheffield, and he felt it his duty to present it. With respect to the circumstance mentioned by the noble lord, he had himself seen an advertisement in the Leeds paper relating to the petition, in which it stated, that the operation of the tax was to lay the burthen on the rich, and not on the poor. In what way that advertisement had been employed by the town crier, he could not pretend to say.

Lord *Milton* rose to present the petition from the county of York, against the property tax. He said that a period of six and thirty years had elapsed since the inhabitants of that county had been called together to petition the legislature. The great difficulty, indeed, of calling together the inhabitants of that extensive county, and the conflicting interests which divided them, had always been so many obstacles in the way, and indeed it was felt to be an injudicious proceeding to bring together so heterogeneous a mass. But, on the present occasion, the feelings of all parties were united, not only with respect to the renewal of the property tax, but to the great distresses under which the country laboured. The only exception, he believed, throughout the realm was to be found on the opposite bench, for the right hon. gentleman still seemed to doubt those distresses, or at least persevered in thinking that they were not only transitory, but greatly exaggerated. Before he presented the petition, he wished to state, that the meeting consisted, as he was informed, of not less than 8000 freeholders, certainly, he was within the number when he stated that 5000 were assembled on that occasion in the Castle-yard. Among that number there were some persons attached to the present government, who, if they thought their voice could have been heard, or could have produced any influence, would have used their exertions to persuade the meeting that the petition was neither necessary nor salutary. But they abstained from all such interference, and to him that was a convincing proof they felt any interference would be useless. He understood, however, that the petition did not pass unanimously, for among the 5000 freeholders, there were some twelve or twenty persons, the known supporters of government, who held up their hands against it. But that fact proved volumes; it proved more than unanimity, for it showed that they were ready to avail themselves of any jarring or dissention that might arise. No such dissention, however, did arise, and the perfect unanimity of feeling in the meeting was fairly to be inferred from thence. On the former occasion when a petition was presented from the county of York, it was of such magnitude, that it would have reached from the body of that House to Westminster-hall. The present one certainly was not quite so long, because there had not been sufficient time for making it so; but it derived sufficient weight from the number of gentlemen who were assembled. It proved also, that the county of York was animated by the same feeling which prevailed in that House; and as he, for one, believed that House to be a faithful representation of the people, he hoped he should not be deceived on the present occasion, but that they would attend to the voice of the people, thus unequivocally expressed, by petitions from all parts of the country, emanating from meetings legally convened, by the respective mayors and sheriffs.

Lord *Lascelles* considered it the duty of the House to receive every petition from the country with candour and attention, and indeed on every occasion they had shown themselves always disposed to do so. At the same time he reprobated the idea, that because individuals chose to be absent from a public meeting held for the purpose of petitioning parliament, or who were compelled from urgent and indispensable business to be absent, such absence should be considered as an acquiescence in the propositions adopted by the general meeting. Probably they saw no utility in their going, and might therefore decline interfering in a cause which they had no doubt would be carried against them. He was aware the meeting which had agreed to this petition, was very respectably attended, and he trusted the House would give every due weight to this petition, yet he implored the House not to admit the idea of its being the unanimous voice of the county.

Lord *George Cavendish* was astonished at the remarks occasionally delivered in the House when petitions not consonant to the feelings or wishes of a certain class of members, were presented. Every opportunity seemed to be taken, every circumstance eagerly grasped at, to induce the House to believe something or other which might lessen the weight of the petition. Against such conduct he, for one, would enter his protest. The petition now before the House had been fairly subscribed. The numbers collected at the meeting were very great, as it was during the period of the assizes. He would earnestly dissuade gentlemen from endeavouring, by such contemptible means to weaken the design of petitions.

Mr. *Drummond* presented a petition from the justices of peace, freeholders, and commissioners of supply of the county of Perth, which, while it prayed for retrenchments and economy, considered the property tax modified as expedient, provided no sufficient substitute could be found [Hear, hear!].

General *Fergusson* noticed the cheers from the noble lord and his friends opposite, from which he collected, that they looked upon this as a petition in favour of the property tax. But the House should be set right as to the petitions from Scotland, where the representation was such, that in the large and populous county of Perth, he did not believe there were more than 200 such persons as the subscribers: and these, he understood, amounted only to 20 or 30. He left the House to judge whether such petitions could speak the voice of the people.

Mr. *Drummond* said the petition was signed by 41 respectable persons; but the weather was very unsuitable for a larger attendance.

Sir *G. Warrender* contended, that where a meeting was respectably attended, their petition, whatever its particular object was, had no right whatever to be abused by the House. As British subjects they were always entitled to profound respect from this House. The county which the worthy general represented had presented a petition, and though it was nearly the largest county in Scotland, yet there were only four dissentient voices from a series of resolutions proposed in favour of the property tax. That county had, with the small exception he had just mentioned, agreed, that no better remedy for the present distressed state of agriculture could be found, than this tax modified, as was proposed, in a proper manner. He was sorry to see petitions from Scotland so much branded as they were with sinister motives. The petition now before the House was not signed by paupers who had no share in the public burthens: it was signed by individuals both able and willing to pay while there was a demand for such payments.

General *Fergusson* said, it was not the question whether his county had done right or wrong. He agreed as to the respectability and independence of those who had signed this petition; but he must say that the representation in Scotland was such in its effects, as to give divine right not merely to kings, but to ministers.

Mr. *Baring* said, the petition now read prayed for a modification of the tax; but he would ask what kind of modification? Why, it was one which would exclude the petitioners from paying this tax; but they had no objection whatever that it should be rigorously levied from others. "O," say the petitioners, "save our pockets; take it wherever you please, only let us be exempted." Such, too, was that of those petitioners who were collected together by a bell at Sheffield, all of whom petitioned for the express purpose of being themselves freed from taxes. The present petition was signed by a few individuals, calling themselves "commissioners of supply," a class of persons he did not comprehend, but its object was still to have that burthen cast on others which they found too heavy for themselves.

Lord *Binning* said, that he was often pained at observing the inconsistent conduct of gentlemen on the opposite side of the House. When a petition was presented to the House, in the smallest degree hostile to the tax, then the most violent clamour was raised, and expressions of resentment against the administration were repeatedly heard; but when a petition of a contrary nature was before the House, then the opposition went to work in a very just manner indeed! They described the meeting where such a petition was agreed to, as by no means respectably attended; and when they found that pitiful shelter insufficient, they endeavoured to lead the House to a misrepresentation of the petition, or in other words, they told the House that the petitioners thought one thing and said another. He protested against such gross improprieties, as derogatory, not only to the character of the House, but even to the petitioners. He was astonished at what had fallen from the hon. general, for whose character no person could feel more respect than he did. He was as proud of his country as any man could be. He was proud of the virtues, the patriotism, and the manly independence of feeling which it was the glory of Scotchmen to possess. And he could tell the hon. gentleman who had spoken of a respectable body of men in Scotland as persons calling themselves commissioners of supply, that these persons were a body actuated by the most enlightened, virtuous, and loyal principles. By the act of parliament, no doubt, a person whose income was rated at 100*l.* in the king's books might be a commissioner of supply; but they were well known to be men actuated in every part of their conduct by the purest motives. He knew well the high respectability attached, and he would say justly attached, to the name of general Fergusson, and the more he considered such respectability the more he regretted that he should have spoken in terms so derogatory to the honour of his country. The petition now presented had been much misrepresented. The petitioners did not express the most distant wish for personal exemption from the tax at the expense of others. They detested such a mercenary idea, and in fact wished for a modification equally extended to all parties. They were able, and they declared themselves willing, to pay this tax. They considered it the most competent measure which ministers could devise. They had seen the honour and glory of their country promoted; they had seen our long and arduous struggle terminated; and they considered this tax as the primary cause of such brilliant success. He therefore hoped that when petitions were presented they would no longer be attacked when they presumed to differ from the wishes of some members in that House.

A Member, whose name we could not learn, was anxious to hear the prayer of the petition again read. It had been so variously represented by members on both sides of the House, that he felt himself at a loss to decide what was or was not its real import.

Lord *Castlereagh* observed, that the conduct of gentlemen on the opposite side was certainly worthy of animadversion. Notwithstanding their high pretensions to impartiality, they acted in a most improper manner when petitions of any kind were presented to the House. When the petition was agreeable to their own wishes, they instantly raised a violent clamour, and poured the most illiberal abuse on ministers; but when it happened to differ from what they wished it to be, they turned a deaf ear to it. He really thought this was by no means a decorous way of receiving petitions. He would now beg, that the petition might be again read by the clerk, which he had no doubt would at once satisfy the House that it had been misrepresented.

The petition was accordingly read. The petitioners " deprecated all exaggerated and disheartening representations of the inability of the country to sustain those unavoidable charges which the war has entailed upon it, and which necessity, not less than its best interests and soundest policy demand, that it should still endure; that if the necessities of the state had permitted government to dispense, immediately upon the return of peace, with those imposts, which a wide extended warfare had necessarily caused, they should have rejoiced in the seasonable relief which such an alleviation of public burthens would have afforded; and they should have derived peculiar satisfaction from the immediate and entire cessation of that tax which attaches upon income; and it would have afforded them much gratification, if other means could have been devised for raising the requisite supplies equally adequate, and as well calculated as that most efficacious financial resource has proved for sustaining the public credit, for bearing with comparative lightness on the poorer and labouring classes of the community, and for reaching income in the possession of whomsoever it may be vested; they apprehend, however, that no such substitute can be found; and they are of opinion, that in the peculiar situation of the country it is a measure of expediency to submit to the continuance of that tax, provided that it be so limited in its endurance, as to be co-existent only with the necessity which requires its prolongation; that it be so abated in its rate, as to be rendered merely adequate to that necessity; that it be so modified, as to reconcile its actual operation with its professed principle of making the means of each individual the measure of his contribution towards the exigency of the state; that it be made to bear in equitable proportion upon income, according to the sources whence it is derived; and provided also, that essential relief be afforded to the agriculturist, from the inequality and severity with which this tax has hitherto been applied to that class of the community; they rely with confidence on the wisdom and in the equity of the legislature for the effectual fulfilment of those conditions which they have stated to be the basis of their acquiescence in this measure, more especially in regard to the assessment of profits arising from the cultivation of the soil."

Mr. *Burrell* stated, that the petitioners might indeed be very willing, but he questioned much their ability to pay the tax; as all his tenants who had signed the petition, with the exception of one individual, had become bankrupts [Hear, hear!].

Mr. *Ponsonby* trusted he was none of those individuals whose conduct the noble lord had so severely reprimanded, as contrary to every sense of decorum. Indeed, the noble lord himself seemed very decorous, when any petition was presented to the House [Hear!]. He (Mr. Ponsonby) listened to every petition brought before the House, without the smallest regard to the side which the petitioners took. No man could feel more deeply than he did, the high respect to which the petitions of British subjects were entitled from a British House of Commons. Yet with all the attention he had been able to give to the petition now twice read, he owned he could not understand the precise object at which the petitioners aimed. He begged pardon of the noble lord, but probably it arose from a defect of intellect. Really, with the little understanding he had, he must say that he thought the petitioners very liberal in their own way, in telling the minister he might load every person he pleased with this tax, but, that forsooth, he was not to touch a farthing of theirs! But he would tell the noble lord, who seemed so anxious respecting the decorum of the House, that an opportunity would soon be presented to him of showing the public how far he regarded their petitions. The people of Great Britain would soon see, from the part which the noble lord took in the debate, whether he was animated by that profound respect for them, by that unbiassed regard to propriety of conduct, by that anxious desire to deal fairly between man and man, and that patient attention in hearing their complaints, which he charged others with so culpably neglecting. The public would soon see who were or were not their friends, and who had the greatest compassion for them in their miserably exhausted state by the recent war.

Sir *George Clerke* was sorry that obloquy should be so unjustly thrown on Scotland, as had been done by former speakers. The course followed by gentlemen on the opposite side, had been well described by his noble friend. The more he considered the petition, the more he was convinced that if he should say any thing, it would weaken the effect which that petition was so admirably fitted to produce. But he again deprecated the conduct of those gentlemen in the improper views which they formed of every petition, however respectable the character or fortunes of the individuals might be, who had signed it, unless these petitions were equally clamorous with themselves against the measures of administration. The hon. member for Taunton had said that the petitions which he (sir G. Clerke) and Mr. Drummond had presented, were for exempting the petitioners from the tax at the expense of others. He would appeal to the House, whether in the present case, or whether in fact in any case such unworthy motives had ever been expressed by any class of British subjects. He concluded by approving highly of the tax, as the most equitable which could possibly be levied.

Mr. *Forbes* said, that the petition might be viewed as both for and against the tax. The petitioners seemed not to have had any precise object in view. He was sorry to hear Scotland charged with a neglect in paying taxes, and particularly as being deficient in paying her proper share of the property tax. Such insinuations were extremely unjust, and had a very bad tendency indeed. The tax was as severely levied from a Scotchman as it could possibly be from an Englishman; and he believed there was not a class of men in the British empire, who paid taxes more conscientiously and more faithfully than the people of Scotland did.

Mr. *R. Abercrombie* did not know that there existed in Scotland so general an execration of taxes. The people were certainly labouring under the pressure of heavy taxation, but no petition, complaining of the property tax, had been presented from the county of Banff.

Mr. *Forbes* said, that what the hon. member had stated with respect to the opinions of the Scotch was not correct. An equal number of petitions against the tax had been presented from Scotland, in comparison with other parts of the kingdom.

Sir *William Curtis* rose to present a petition from the merchants, bankers, and traders of the city of London against the continuance of the property tax. This meeting had, in consequence of a requisition, signed by several of that respectable body, to the Lord Mayor, been convened by public advertisement, in the Egyptian-hall, Mansion-house. A meeting of a more numerous and respectable nature never had met in the city of London. Assembled to state their sentiments on this important subject to parliament, they had firmly but respectfully declared their abhorrence of a tax repugnant to every thing like British feeling. Meetings of such a nature did not often take place in London, yet, in particular cases, where the safety and honour of the country had been in danger, the good citizens had shown their attachment, in the most satisfactory manner, to the genius, the spirit, and the preservation of our glorious constitution. He would allude to two instances, well-known to many that heard him. In the year 1793, when a general gloom pervaded the country, when credit seemed totally annihilated, and every man doubted his neighbour, a meeting of the merchants, bankers, and traders of London was held. By their spirited resolutions, the cloud which hung over the country was dispelled, the public credit was re-established, and every thing again assumed a smiling aspect. When on the failure of the negociations in 1798 the gloom seemed again to return, that same body had met in the Royal Exchange, and restored confidence, he would not say merely to those out of doors, but even to members in that House. The pressure of taxes was then deeply felt; the funds were depressed, and a general painful anxiety pervaded every bosom, respecting what would be the result. But that meeting in 1798 resolved that it was requisite for the safety of the country that the expenditure of every year should be levied within the year, and on their resolutions the minister, introduced the property tax to the consideration of the House. These resolutions had gladdened the heart of that celebrated minister, Mr. Pitt, who was now no more, as giving him the rational hope of reviving the funds of the country. Sir William said, he was present in the House when the tax was first proposed, and he heard Mr. Pitt declare that it should be a war tax only, and should positively cease on the restoration of peace. He was particularly sorry that a right hon. gentleman, whose character was in every point of view so honourable as the chancellor of the exchequer was, should have for a moment denied that any pledge was given for the abolition of the tax. Not only the members of that House, but every man who knew any thing of the history of the tax, knew that pledges of the most solemn nature had been given for its abolition, pledges which could not be violated without a gross insult to the British character. When this tax was first proposed by the respectable meeting he had alluded to, he would ask the chancellor of the exchequer—he would ask the noble lord (Castlereagh) what were the views entertained by the merchants, bankers, and traders? Did they ever for one moment suppose that this tax was to be continued at the caprice of any minister, when there was no occasion for it, and that the houses of individuals were to be entered, their books examined, and their secrets divulged in a manner which no Briton could bear, and which no Briton ought to bear? Such an idea had never entered their minds. They never refused their money to government when necessity called for it, but they wished to see that necessity properly made out. The petition he had now the honour to present was signed by 22,000 of that number, and if the House were to examine the list of names, they would find many among them who had rallied round government in the most difficult crisis, and had joined heart and hand in its support. We were told by the chancellor of the exchequer that he must have money, as he had great need for it. He would ask, where was that necessity now, that the country had returned to the blessings of peace? In the proposal made for its renewal last year he had concurred, because he was then convinced, from the situation in which the country was placed, that ministers required it. It was necessary for the subjugation of that restless enemy with whom we had been compelled to go again to war. But now, when that enemy no longer was an object of dread, now, when the country was labouring under almost incredible distresses, were these distresses not to be alleviated, but was this intolerable burthen still to remain? "Go to the different parts of the country (said sir William) examine the thousand varied hardships which numbers are bearing, and let any man judge whether the minister can be justified, who, regardless of these distresses, dares to add to their number. Even in London, where men have better means of getting some relief, let the long list of bankruptcies, and the numbers out of employment, bear witness to the melancholy state of the country. The citizens of London, who had signed this petition, would pay when payment was indispensable; but they detested the idea of unnecessary oppression [Cheers]." He concluded by referring to an attempt made to get a counter petition in favour of the tax, but observed, that its friends finding they could only procure twenty seven names, had very wisely put the petition in their pockets. The Petition was then read, setting forth,

"That in the judgment of the petitioners, the property or income tax is in its principle arbitrary, at variance with the spirit and general practice of our constitution, and that it ought only to be submitted to in cases of urgent necessity; that, inasmuch as it operated indiscriminately upon all casual as well as permanent incomes, it is not equitable; and that, in its application to trade and commerce, it has been found inquisitorial and oppressive; that, during the long and arduous struggle in which this country has been engaged, the petitioners have patiently submitted to taxes, however burthensome, and even to this imposition, however vexatious, in the confident reliance that, upon the return of peace, they should be relieved from those contributions at least which were professedly raised for the purpose of defraying within each year a considerable portion of the extraordinary and unavoidable expenses of the war; that the faith of parliament had been expressly pledged for the cessation of the income tax with the war, which alone could justify such establishments and expenditure as rendered that galling burthen necessary; and that, in the petitioners understanding and belief, it had never been continued nor renewed without its being accompanied by the same pledge; that no modification of its details, or abatement in the rate of its immediate exactions, can in the opinion of the petitioners remove the obnoxious principle of this tax, or compensate for the alarming precedent of its enactment during peace; that to anticipate in time of peace those extraordinary resources which should be reserved for the defence of the national interest, honour, and independence, when either are endangered by foreign aggression, appears to the petitioners to be injurious not only to the domestic comfort and prosperity of the country, but to its reputation and influence abroad; that the petitioners, therefore, earnestly intreat the House not to permit the renewal of the income and property tax, and to pro-but he owned he felt it impossible for him to sit silent, after the observations that had been made by the representatives for the city of London. He was highly pleased with the feelings that governed the conduct of the 22,000 persons, whose names were signed to this petition. They took no narrow view of the question, but expressed their sentiments as decidedly hostile to the principle of the tax, and to its inquisitorial and oppressive nature. He recollected, on a former occasion, when the chancellor of the exchequer said, that petitions were to be weighed by their own merits, and not to be estimated by the situations of those who signed them—that gold chains and fur gowns did not render representations made to parliament a whit more worthy of notice. This session, however, petitions were laid on the table, not merely supported by those who wore fur gowns and gold chains, but by the whole mass of the commercial population of London. The right hon. gentleman ought now to consider, whether the boon he offered to the commercial and funded interest, was indeed a boon, when he found a great body of gentlemen, representing the whole of that interest, unanimously rejected it. The noble lord had talked of "clamouring down" the proposition for renewing the income tax. Now, he should be glad to know, did the noble lord think that those 22,000 gentlemen had joined in the cry of clamouring down the measure? The petition had lain, for a length of time, to be signed by the merchants of London. During that period, they had had an opportunity of attending the House—of hearing what occurred there—and of reading every thing that was offered, for or against this measure. It appeared, however, that the reasoning in favour of the tax, had not altered their view of it; for now came their petition, signed by 22,000 persons, such as they had heard described—and he asked of the noble lord, whether he conceived it was the work, or spoke the sentiments of ignorant, clamorous persons, or was not, on the contrary, the result of the deliberate consideration of gentlemen every way qualified to weigh and balance the question?

Mr. *Alexander* said, he did not often speak in that House, but, on the present occasion, he felt himself imperatively called on to state his opinion. Seeing the strong opposition that was made to the renewal of this tax, he deemed it right to express his conviction, that it was a most wise and proper measure. He admitted that it was a very inconvenient tax—but it was fit that such temporary inconvenience should be borne, for the purpose of arriving at a permanent good. It put him to great inconvenience—he suffered much from it—but he and his constituents were content to bear it, because they thought it would, ultimately, render them essential service. He had conversed with several persons connected with the monied and commercial interest, who considered this measure the best that could be devised. They felt its pressure; but they also felt, that the honour, dignity, and consequence of this nation could not be maintained without it. Viewing the measure in exactly the same light, he should conscientiously give it his support.

Mr. *Ellison* said, he had been, for many years, a member of that House, and he derived the greatest gratification from the reflection—a gratification that he should carry with him to his grave, that he had uniformly supported the measures of Mr. Pitt. He had heard, for the first time, that evening, that Mr. Pitt was indebted for all his great plans to the city of London—a position which he was very much inclined to doubt. The system of meeting the expenses of the year, within the year, was one of those which, he believed, originated with Mr. Pitt; and by means of which this country had achieved a great deal. This tax constituted a branch of that system; and, as his own common sense told him, that, in the present instance, it was a war tax, necessary for defraying the expenses created by the war—and that it could not be fairly considered a tax applicable to the expenses of peace—he should support it. Gentlemen who now opposed it, said, they had formerly voted for it, because they thought it necessary; for this very reason, he should now vote for the tax, because he conceived it was called for to wind up the expenses of the war.

Mr. *William Smith* would not have said a word on this occasion, if it were not for what fell from the hon. gentleman (Mr. Alexander) below him. The city members had brought up a petition, not merely signed by those who were their constituents, but by several thousand respectable persons, who were residents in the metropolis. He had heard, with very great surprise, the hon. gentleman to whom he had alluded, speak with considerable confidence of the monied interest, as favourable to this measure. Now, if the sentiments of the monied interest, in general, were not to be collected from the subscribers to the city petition, he was really at a loss to know where they were to be looked for. And he should ask any 658 rational men in Europe, whether they would place their confidence in the sentiments of 22,000 merchants, bankers, and traders, speaking the general sense of the monied interest, or incline to the opinion of a few of the hon. gentleman's private friends? The hon. gentleman also spoke, if his ears did not deceive him, of his "constituents!" [Hear, hear]. The sentiments of the hon. gentleman's constituents, he was sure, were very likely to weigh a great deal, in the consideration of the House, against the opinion of 22,000 men of first-rate character and property. His constituents were to be found within the walls of that respectable borough in the county of Wilts, Old Sarum [Hear, hear! and a laugh]. He believed, they were, in number, five or six [A laugh, and cries of No! no!]. He found that he had over-rated them four-fold.—The hon. gentleman's "constituents" were, if he might use the phrase, one person. Such were the constituents and such the monied interest to which the hon. gentleman had referred, and placed in opposition to the recorded sentiments of 22,000 persons; his conduct had really filled him with so much astonishment, that he felt quite confused, and could scarcely believe he had heard him correctly. He should, at some future period, deliver his sentiments on certain points of this important question; and he hoped he should recover sufficiently from his astonishment, not to vote on the wrong side, when the Speaker put the question to the House.

Mr. *Alexander*, in explanation, said, he was a man engaged in business, and had considerable property placed in his hands. When he spoke of persons connected with the monied interest, he alluded to those with whom he had extensive transactions.

The several petitions were ordered to lie on the table.

Motion for Account of Persons under Sentence of Death.] Mr. *Bennet* wished to ask the noble lord opposite, why there had been so much delay in deciding in council on the cases of the prisoners in Newgate now under sentence of death? He had himself found by personal inspection of the gaol of Newgate, that 58 persons under sentence of death were there confined. Many of these had received their sentence at the December sessions, and had been, therefore, for months confined in a state of the most painful suspense. The subject was the more worthy of observation, since, in consequence of the paucity of cells, there being but 15, three unhappy prisoners were placed in each cell. If a satisfactory explanation were not given, he should bring the subject directly under the consideration of the House.

Lord *Castlereagh* stated, that the cause of the delay was, the continued indisposition of the Prince Regent, and the difficulty and inconvenience of assembling the law officers at Brighton, who ought to be present in council on these occasions.

Lord *Milton* warmly expressed his astonishment and indignation at what had fallen from the noble lord. What was the indisposition which thus prevented the most solemn act of royalty? Was it mere sickness? Was it what in common life was called indisposition? Did the noble lord, standing there as minister of the Crown, say that that was a sufficient reason for allowing so important a question as the ascertaining of the royal pleasure with respect to the life or death of so many unhappy persons, to remain for so many months undetermined? This grievous evil was to exist because the individual who filled the kingly office in this country, happened to be what the noble lord called indisposed, and could not come to London, and because there would be some difficulty and inconvenience in collecting at Brighton the law authorities when it was necessary to consult on the subject. Whatever might be that difficulty and inconvenience—if Brighton were 500 instead of 50 miles from London—if it were on the coast of Sutherland instead of on the coast of Sussex, it was the duty of his majesty's government to take the necessary measures for the effectual discharge of this important function of royalty; and he repeated, that he felt the utmost astonishment and indignation at the neglect that had been evinced. The noble lord concluded by apologizing for his warmth, and by moving "that there be laid on the table an account of the number of persons under sentence of death in Newgate, with the dates at which they were severally sentenced."

The *Attorney General* said, he saw no objection to the production of the account which the noble lord called for, but it did appear to him extraordinary that the answer of his noble friend should be so taken. He could easily conceive that an hon. member, upon going to Newgate, might find many persons on whom sentence of death had been passed, in a state of great suspense and anxiety, and he might feel that it was highly desirable that their cases should be disposed of with as little delay as possible: but if the hon. member had attended to the recorder's reports, he would have found that it was no new occurrence for the decision on the cases of persons in such a situation to be delayed for a considerable length of time, and the practical inconvenience that might result from calling away the law officers from their other judicial functions at a particular period ought to be considered. He repeated, that a great practical inconvenience might result from compelling the attendance of the judges at certain periods at a place so distant, where the Prince Regent was confined by his indisposition. It must be perfectly familiar to all who had attended to these matters, that in the greater number of cases the sentence of death was remitted, and it was only in a comparatively small number of instances that, for the security of the public, the law was suffered to take its course. There was a very considerable number at present under sentence of death; but it might be confidently anticipated, that with respect to the greater number they would not be discharged, but have the capital part of their punishment remitted. The judgment of their peers, however, had found them guilty of capital crimes, and therefore if the matter were coolly and impartially looked at, it would appear that very few of them had any great reason to complain. The delay was, indeed, in the present instance considerable; but on all such occasions every one of the cases received the most careful and anxious consideration upon examination of the judges' notes, and some delay was therefore unavoidable. They were considered by the judges, and all the learned lords who attended the council when these matters were the subject of deliberation; and though he would not oppose the present motion, he denied that there was any substantial ground of complaint.

Mr. *Wynn* said, he really could hardly believe the testimony of his own ears when he heard it stated by his majesty's attorney general that there was no practical inconvenience in keeping fifty-eight unfortunate men in a state of such agonizing suspense. Were they then to be told, that there was no great hardship in keeping men still ignorant of their fate, on whom sentence of death had been passed at the December sessions? Was it nothing to keep them in this state of cruel suspense? All who had attended particularly to the nature and effect of penal law, had perceived the mischievous consequences which followed from too great an interval between the sentence and execution. The miserable persons themselves were in the mean time perhaps buoyed up with false hopes, and would be doubly punished on finding afterwards that they had flattered themselves with vain expectations. Two councils had been lately held, and a message on an important subject had been brought down within these few days, which had been considered at one of these meetings, so that the delay in the present instance did not arise from the necessity of the case. But then it was said, that great inconvenience would arise from compelling the attendance of the judges at such a distance. His answer was, that whatever the inconvenience might be, it ought to be submitted to; for though the evil might be great, it was nothing in comparison of that which arose from such a delay in the execution of this important duty. But, in point of fact, the attendance of all the judges was not required, and the reports of the judges were sometimes taken by the lord chancellor and the recorder. The opinions of the judges were always given in on these occasions, but it was not considered necessary that they themselves should be present. So much as to the effects of this delay with respect to the individuals. But they must also look at the matter with a view to the interest of the public. What was the great purpose of punishment? Example. But if such a long interval were suffered to elapse between the trial, the sentence, and the punishment, the crime would be forgotten, and nothing would appear but a parcel of men going to be hanged, without its being generally known for what—a spectacle for idle people! These were the effects of this delay, which must be considered as most pernicious in a public view, as well as most cruel with respect to the miserable individuals.

The *Attorney General*, in explanation, said, that he did not assert that no practical inconvenience arose from the delay; but that it was not uncommon, with respect to those who were not ordered for immediate execution, for some delay to take place before the pleasure of the Crown was announced as to their cases.

The motion was then agreed to.

MOTION FOR THE CONTINUANCE OF THE PROPERTY TAX.] The House having resolved itself into a committee of ways and means, for raising the supply granted to his majesty, Mr. Brogden in the chair,

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* rose to submit his proposition for the continuance of the property tax. He expressed his hope that when the very important and serious nature of the subject was considered, the committee would apply itself to the question with that calmness and impartiality which its importance demanded. He was now to submit for the serious and deliberate consideration of parliament his proposition for the continuance of the property tax: and as the House had already sanctioned the estimates for a considerable naval and military establishment, it was an obvious consequence, that the necessary means must be allowed for the support of those establishments. It was said, that the general sense of the country was strongly adverse to the continuance of this tax; but he could not consider that opinion, in whatever degree it might exist, otherwise than as a prejudice, arising partly from feelings of very natural impatience, and partly from misapprehensions and misrepresentations, which, he was persuaded, would be removed when the subject came to be better considered. He had been told of the vast number of petitions which had come up against the measure. Still he thought it his duty to submit the question for the calm and deliberate consideration of parliament, and by its judgment he would abide. The petitions contained only the sentiments of a very small proportion of the people [Hear, hear!]. It could not be contended that the signatures to those petitions, although very numerous, contained a very great proportion of the whole population of the country; nor could it be expected that many persons would carry disinterestedness and public spirit so far as to petition in favour of a heavy tax; though, in fact, there were on the table several petitions praying for its continuance with more or less modification. But, even if a much greater number had petitioned against the measure, he should still consider it his duty to submit it to the consideration of the House, and to give parliament an opportunity of judging of its propriety, by laying before them the grounds upon which he thought it fitting to make the proposition. The petitioners had only attended to the pressure upon themselves, which they were naturally anxious to remove, because they thought it no longer necessary. But he was persuaded that such would not have been their judgment, if they had had an opportunity of being fully acquainted with the whole matter, and of deliberating calmly and impartially upon the subject.

He was the more convinced that the petitioners had not understood the subject, and had never coolly and impartially considered it, when he observed that almost all these petitions contained the unfounded allegation that the government and parliament stood pledged that the tax should cease with the war. In the petition which had been last presented (the London petition), signed, he admitted, by a great number of persons of the highest respectability, the same allegation was strongly put forward. But if the petition had been agreed to upon the grounds and arguments stated by the worthy baronet (sir William Curtis), he should certainly consider it as any thing rather than the calm and deliberate judgment of the bankers, merchants, and traders of the city of London. The worthy baronet said, that the tax originated in a meeting of merchants, bankers, and others, in London; and that it was thereupon adopted by Mr. Pitt, with a distinct pledge that it should not be continued after the conclusion of a general peace. That was the argument of the worthy baronet: and if the petition rested on that, the committee would presently see how that matter really stood. In the year 1798, in consequence of the alarming state of public credit, a meeting was held in the city of London, and there a great sum was subscribed by several very respectable individuals by way of war contribution. Mr. Pitt had, however, previously determined to relieve in some measure the pressure on the funds by raising a large sum for the service of the year, by means of the aid and contribution tax, which was more commonly called by the name of the triple assessment. This he afterwards changed into the far less burthensome and less objectionable measure, the income tax; but, instead of giving any pledge that the tax should cease with the war, he distinctly stated in his original opening speech, that it should be continued during one year of peace for every year of war. For instance, if the war continued three years, then the tax was to remain for three years of peace. Mr. Pitt not only did not propose that it should cease with the war, but a proportion of the interest and sinking fund of loans was charged upon it much larger than its produce in one year. Suppose the interest and sinking fund four millions and a half, and the sum borrowed 20 millions, the interest and sinking fund proportioned to fifteen and a half millions was to be charged on the income tax. The consequence of this system, which completely contradicted the argument of the worthy baronet, was, that when the preliminaries were signed, the income tax had been already pledged to the public creditor during eight years of peace: so that it was perfectly clear, that when the income tax originated, it was not in the contemplation either of Mr. Pitt, of parliament, or of the nation, that it must cease with the war. At the peace of Amiens, however, the tax, which was then mortgaged for fifty-six millions, was set aside by lord Sidmouth; but that was done by imposing a large mass of permanent taxes, amounting to no less than five millions a year. On the renewal of the war, lord Sidmouth proposed the property tax, which was adopted, but no pledge whatever was given that it should immediately cease with the war.

In this situation the matter stood, when a considerable addition was made to the amount of the tax by lord Henry Petty (the present marquis of Lansdowne), then chancellor of the exchequer. From the necessity of the occasion the tax was at that time raised from 6¼ to 10 per cent. and the financial plan was submitted to parliament which he had referred to on a late occasion. What he had then said had been much misapprehended, and consequently misrepresented. What he had stated was, that the paln in qaestion was so constructed as to render it necessary, in certain events, that the tax should not cease with the war. This had been commented on in another place, as if he had represented that the noble lord (Grenville) then at the head of the treasury, and the chancellor of the exchequer, had expressed an intention that the tax should be continued during peace. He had never said so. He had only said that they had considered it merely as a question of expediency, and not a question of good faith; and had never conceived that parliament was pledged to put an end to the tax with the war. In the manner in which he had alluded to that plan, he had expressed himself with all those feelings of respect and regard which he ever ought to entertain towards those noble lords; but he must not lose the benefit of their high authority to show that no distinct pledge was ever given that the tax should cease with the war. In the printed development of that plan it was expressly stated, that it might be expected to cease within a very short time after the conclusion of peace. This was not the language of one who meant to convey a pledge that the tax should at all events cease with the war. If such had been the meaning of those noble persons, would they not have distinctly stated that the property tax was not to be pledged at all to the public creditor? But they spoke of it as a mere question of discretion. In the series of papers then laid on the table, marked (2), it would appear that it was contemplated that the tax might be pledged for large sums. He was able to go somewhat further, and show from a reported speech made by the then chancellor of the exchequer, in reply to some observations offered by the right hon. the treasurer of the navy, that the plan of finance then proposed expressly contemplated the possibility of the tax existing in peace. The noble lord (lord Henry Petty) had then said, "that he made no pledge of his own opinion respecting the permanency of the property tax in time of peace."

Mr. *Baring* rose to order. He insisted that it was extremely irregular to read a passage of a reported account of a speech in parliament.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* answered, that nothing was more usual than to refer historically to accounts of former debates in parliament, and that he had the more right to do so on the present occasion, as a speech of his own had been quoted and commented on in another place.

Mr. *Calcraft* observed, that there was a great difference between quoting an unauthorized report, and a speech which had been corrected and published under the eye of the right hon. gentleman.

Mr. *Rose* observed, that nothing was more common than to refer to a member's speech delivered on a former occasion; but if the hon. gentleman would prefer an oral recollection of what passed on that occasion to a written account of it, he would tell it them from his own memory.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* continued, and remarked, that the speech which had in another House been quoted as his, had no more been published by his authority than that of the noble lord. He would, however, with the permission of the House, go on to state what had been the opinion of the chancellor of the exchequer at the period before referred to [Read, read!]. The noble lord had said, that no one had yet proposed to continue the property tax in time of peace, even as an annual grant, although if the public could be reconciled to it, it might, at a reduced rate, be preferable to many others. His (the chancellor of the exchequer's) own speech, which had been quoted, corresponded exactly in sentiment, and very nearly in expression, with the speech of the noble lord. He had, indeed, stated that he would here take occasion to give some explanation with respect to the property tax, which he was supposed to have pledged himself to repeal. That was not the nature of his pledge, but that the means for repealing it would exist, and that parliament would be free to consider the propriety of applying them. His own opinion was inclined to concur with that of the right hon. gentleman that a small portion of the property tax would be less burthensome than those taxes on consumption, which, though less immediately felt, were ultimately more burthensome and less productive, as being charged with a profit by every person, through whose hands the article passed, and diminished in a similar succession by every hand employed in the collection. The propriety of the continuance of such a small property tax would however remain to be regulated by the public feeling and the public convenience at the time. He thought he had now completely made out his case, that neither in 1803 nor 1806 had any pledge been given that the tax might not be continued under some possible contingencies. He had shown it from written documents, and could confirm it byhis own personal recollection of what then took place.

He came now to the transactions of last year: and certainly he could say, that at least the circumstances of that period, when the event of the great contest which had been renewed in so extraordinary a manner was wholly uncertain, afforded no seasonable opportunity of making such a pledge to the country. It was true that when the tax was proposed, a great many gentlemen suggested various modifications: but he had recommended to the House not to enter, at that important crisis, into minute details, expressing at the same time an opinion, that the consideration of the modifications would come on better at the end of the year, when the question of renewing the tax would be discussed. That time had now arrived, and now was the opportunity for proposing and debating on the modifications.

He had, perhaps, detained the House somewhat too long with these preliminary remarks, but he had done so because he felt that a very strong impression prevailed out of doors that there had been a breach of a solemn pledge. Nor was it to be wondered that those who did not possess the knowledge of hon. members on this subject should be deceived, when it appeared that even hon. members themselves, with all their opportunities of accurate knowledge, had been completely mistaken. It certainly was highly honourable to the national character, that the people were so acutely alive to any supposed violation of faith on the part of public men. But he must say, that, in this case, it was almost impossible that any pledge could have been given. It was almost impossible, because the supposition implied that a contract could be entered into between the people and their representatives, that the same representatives should never, under any possible circumstances, reconsider whether a particular measure might not be beneficial to the people [Hear, hear!]. A minister must be very indiscreet, and entirely unworthy of his situation, who could make such a kind of promise. But, however that might be, it was undeniable that, in the present instance, no such promise had been made. Nothing had occurred which ought to prevent either himself or any other person from proposing a renewal of the tax. No minister had ever pledged himself to its indispensable discontinuance; and Mr. Pitt, on the contrary, had gone so far as expressly to pledge its continuance to the public creditor. The question, therefore, of its revival, from all these circumstances, might be pronounced to be wholly open to discussion.

He came now to that part of the subject which, though in some points of view not so momentous as the question of public honour involved in the supposed breach of faith, was however of more immediate and practical importance—and this was, the necessity of imposing this charge. Here again he was ready to meet the worthy alderman. It was true, as he had said, that the tax was brought in when public credit required it. The period of 1797 was over when the necessity of supporting the public credit was of the severest and most urgent nature. The different misfortunes which then pressed upon the country were aggravated by the loans, amounting to fifty-six millions—a weight beyond what the money market could bear. The depression of the funds was consequently very great—so great, that it was thought advisable to raise the supplies within the year. Now, what had been the case with respect to the two years 1814 and 1815? Exactly one hundred millions had been borrowed—a sum so large, that parliament was called upon to use all its exertions in order to relieve the burthens of the money-market. There had been in fact no period when public credit more required support. At the peace of Amiens—a peace far less glorious and secure than the present—a peace which, in all its relations, was rather a contrast than a parallel with the present peace—yet then, at the very moment of negociating the loan, the funds were as high as 75. Gentlemen need not be told how different were the present prices; nor was it matter of surprise, when it was considered, that in the four last years no less than 165 millions had been borrowed. And here he must be allowed to say, that whatever animadversions might be made on the enormity of these loans, yet whenever he considered the astonishing series of successes and of glory which had resulted from them, he could not but esteem it the highest honour that could have befallen so humble an individual as himself, that he had been the instrument of proposing such a plan of finance to the parliament. The effect of the measures which had been carried through that House had been felt through all the operations of the war. No service had been delayed for want of adequate pecuniary means—no success had been checked in its career for want of the efficient supply of proportionate resources. Large, indeed, our expenditure had been, but there had been no waste, and that had been found to be the truest economy, which, by expending in proportion to the occasion, produced results proportionate to the expense [Hear, hear!]. He was aware that there was another species of economy likely to be recommended and enforced by the hon. gentlemen opposite. All he would say on that subject at present was, let gentlemen wait till the proper opportunity, and proper documents came before them. He would merely add, that he himself anticipated a considerable reduction in several branches of public expenditure.

An hon. baronet had proposed four alternatives for the property tax—all, however, founded on the principle of borrowing instead of raising money. He strongly objected to this principle, because, as he had already shown, the money-market should be relieved, not burthened. There was a time when the very idea of a loan in a period of peace would have excited general alarm. The institution of the sinking fund had served to relieve much of these fears; and he did not mean to say that when the system of credit should have become improved, a loan might not be resorted to; but the loan must follow, not precede, the improvement of this credit. He had heard indeed that it had been said, that a small loan would give animation to the money market. Now, though he was inclined to respect the opinions of practical men, whose experience he had generally found very safe to rely upon in all practical matters; yet there was something so paradoxical in this assertion, that he could not subscribe to it, notwithstanding all his respect for the quarter from which it came. Though he had no doubt that the assertors of this opinion believed themselves to be perfectly disinterested in the advice which they gave, yet it was not easy to acquit them of some sort of bias. Some latent motive, unknown even to themselves, might be created by the difference between paying five per cent. out of their income, and adding 20 per cent. to it. On a former occasion he had illustrated the advantage of taxation over borrowing, by supposing the familiar instance of a miraculous shower of gold, by which every man might have a guinea in his pocket. In this case no man would, from the possession of a single guinea, be the more able to pay a debt of ten pounds. No man, in fact, would derive any serious or permanent advantage from such an acquisition. On the other hand, let the collected mass of these individual guineas come into the hands of the chancellor of the exchequer, and then pass through the bank, and the country banks, into all the hands of those who most want it, it would thus become an active productive capital to the nation. Instead of merely furnishing the means of a short indulgence, or a temporary repose, it would enable those who employ and direct the industry of the country to call it into vigorous action. Every sum so distributed would become the parent of increasing wealth and prosperity. Agriculture and commerce would be encouraged, and the system of money speculations would revive and flourish. Every gentleman must, he believed, see the applicability of this illustration: every one must see that the principle of it had been the cause that, under all its difficulties, the country had not been irrecoverably depressed—that in fact its resources had accumulated, and that the largest loans and most extensive expenditure had only deranged, and could not destroy, the financial means of the nation.

He was unwilling in the present stage to trouble the committee by entering into particulars, but he trusted he had proved that the present state of the public credit rendered it much more expedient to raise the supplies of the year by a tax than by a loan, and he thought it would be easy to prove that no other tax could raise the large sum required with so little pressure as the property tax. Among the many opinions to which he had listened, he had hardly ever heard the general equality and equity of the principle of the property tax denied—[Hear, hear! from the opposition side]—he meant compared with the circumstances of the individual and the weight of other taxes; those upon articles of consumption bore with a very unequal pressure, not being in proportion to the resources, but to the expenditure of the individual, which a thousand circumstances might affect. In the course of the last session, with a view to provide a substitute for the tax in question, he had suggested the adoption of various others. To the nature of them he need not now refer, but he was willing to submit the property tax to be tried by that criterion. Those substitutes were selected by him after the fullest consideration, and such parts of them as appeared least liable to objection had been sanctioned by parliament, and pledged to supply the charge of the loan; and the general sentiment in the House and the country seemed to be, that the remaining parts, inadequate as they would be to replace the property tax would be much more burthensome and injurious than the impost they were chosen to succeed. Previous to the meeting of parliament, he had received many suggestions from different quarters as to the modes of regulating parts of this measure, and among them there certainly was shown a disposition to exempt from the operation of the bill all profits derived from industry. He was ready to allow, that could this object be fairly accomplished, some advantages might result; but, in the first place, the landed interest would then have a right to complain that the whole mass of commercial property was exempted from all payment. The committee was also aware, that a question of delicacy existed with respect to money in the funds, and it had been uniformly contended by Mr. Pitt, that that species of property could not justly be subjected to taxation, if all other sources of emolument were not also rendered liable. Then, indeed, a real question of a breach of public faith would arise, for in every loan act a distinct clause was inserted, providing that the dividend of the loan should never be subject to taxation.

If it were the pleasure of the House to entertain the bill in the first instance, he thought that means might be found in its progress to remove the major part of the objections to it. That portion of the tax raised upon money in the funds, deducted by the officers appointed to pay dividends, was the most perfect machine that could be devised: neither more nor less than the fair amount was retained, without the possibility of evasion or overcharge. He admitted that in that part of the measure which related to incomes derived from industry, there were considerable defects; the machine here lost its simplicity and its facility. This part of the system divided itself chiefly into two great branches, distinguished in the act by schedules B. and D., the first referring to so much of the landed property as respected the immediate interest of the actual occupier of the soil, and the last to the commercial interest. Under the present peculiar circumstances of the agricultural tenants, it could not be denied that they were entitled to great relief, of which he had spoken on a former night, and the modifications then noticed, he believed, had given general satisfaction, as being adequate to the object. He scarcely thought it necessary to re-state what he had then said: the committee was aware that the profits of the tenant had hitherto been calculated at three-fourths of the rent he paid; under the new bill these profits were only to be estimated at one-third of the rent, which, besides being a great immediate reduction, would also operate much in favour of the tenantry of the country, by bringing them within the classes entitled to abatements. The accounts upon the table showed, according to the last assessment, that the number of the tenants of land entitled to total exemption, then only amounted to 114,000, but by the proposed modification the number would be increased to 527,000: those entitled to abated rates of tax amounted to 400,000, and their number would in future be reduced to 53,000, the whole of the remainder passing into the class, totally exempted, and 42,000 tenants, who hitherto had not been permitted to make any abatement, holding farms of the yearly rent of 450*l.* would hereafter be only 6,000. Besides this relief, it was his intention to propose a diminution of the tax upon horses employed in agriculture: if the property tax should pass, he should suggest that only 7*s.* 6*d.* should be paid for each horse, and that all farmers occupying land of a less annual rent than 100*l.* should not be required to contribute at all, to that tax. This alteration would be a most important advantage to the western counties and to Wales. As to schedule D. he confessed that he had not been able to discover any complete remedy for the complaints of persons included in it. It must however be observed, that the same grievances that affected the tenant did not operate against the tradesman; for the tenant of land was not charged upon any return made by himself, but upon an assumed profit calculated by the amount of the rent; therefore an increase of rent, though it reduced his emoluments, compelled him to pay a heavier contribution to the state. With respect to him, therefore, it was the wish of the supporters of this measure to afford as much relief as was consistent with the nature of the case; and it was intended to give the commissioners some additional powers, to enable them to make a fair allowance in case of unexpected and extraordinary losses on the part of the farmer. The merchant on the other hand, could never be assessed but according to the amount of his own return, and any deficiency in his income could be stated in his return of the succeeding year. In order, however, to obviate some of the objections on this part of the question, a clause would be introduced into the new bill, under which an individual in trade might be charged according to his estimated profits of the last year; so that he would not be called upon to make a fresh return, but might pay the five per cent. upon a sum previously stated. If the merchant submitted to this charge, of course no further inquiry would be necessary; and it was consequently in his power, by the payment of the sum he contributed last year, to avoid any painful and inconvenient disclosure [Hear, hear! from the Opposition side]. Undoubtedly, many cases might occur where the profits had diminished, and then fresh returns would be deemed necessary, if the party wished to avail himself of the opportunity of diminishing his payment; but if they had increased, no addition would be made to the assessment, unless on a voluntary statement. It would therefore be enacted, that every person in trade not laying an appeal within a fixed period, should be charged to the amount of his previous return; if an appeal were laid, his affairs must necessarily be subjected to a new examination [Hear!]. The regulations under which this inquiry would be conducted, he hoped would weaken the strenuous opposition by gentlemen on the other side of the House, for it would be proposed to revive the clause of 1803, which gave the trader the liberty of being charged by referees of his own nomination; if, however, he preferred to make his return to the commissioners, the investigation should not be made as at present by all the commissioners, but only by one of them, to be selected by ballot, or any other impartial mode, assisted by the clerk; they should receive the explanation of the party appealing, being themselves distinctly sworn to secrecy, and to destroy all memoranda or other documents that might lead to an exposure of the affairs of the merchant. The tribunal would thus consist of only two persons, and the report of the commissioner so chosen should be final.

With these further, and in his opinion very material improvements, he hoped that the House would not only entertain the proposition in the first instance, but, with such other amendments as its wisdom might suggest, would sanction its adoption. It might be proper to mention again what had fallen from him on a former night; namely, that in order to give satisfaction to the public, and to set all hearts at rest as to the continuance of the tax, the time of its duration should be stated in the preamble, with the addition that it was continued only for the purpose of defraying the extraordinary charges occasioned by the war in the first years of peace. The fact of the existence of those charges, he apprehended, could not now be a matter of discussion, the estimates on the table communicating the details; it there appeared, that eight or nine millions would be required for the service of the present year, and four or five for the service of the next. [Mr. Tierney asked across the table for some of the items of charge]. The Chancellor of the Exchequer replied, that it would be difficult for him to state the particular articles with their amounts. One charge was for repairs of the navy, which would be extensive, not only during the next, but several succeeding years: there were, besides, considerable naval expenses of other kinds. A large sum was devoted to the ordnance, and others to various military departments. If the opinion of any gentleman should depend merely upon the question whether twelve millions were necessary beyond the amount of the peace establishment, he could undertake, in a very short time, to satisfy him upon that point. To raise this sum was the object of the property tax, and he earnestly recommended it to the House as a measure of urgent importance. He had been most anxious to render the burthen as light as possible, by the introduction of such practicable modifications as had occurred to him; and he should be happy to adopt others at the suggestion of hon. gentlemen on either side of the House, if they did not diminish the amount to be produced by weakening the powers of the measure. The passing of this bill would facilitate most materially the operations of the whole financial machine of the country: while the property tax was affording a temporary supply to a temporary want, that machine, of late years much disorganized and complicated, might be put into a state of repair and activity which would facilitate the whole proceedings of the nation: with the property tax, the money market would be relieved, and he anticipated a certain, if not a rapid improvement in the public pecuniary concerns; without it, the people would be heavily burthened in other ways, and he could foresee nothing but a long succession of difficulties and embarrassments [Hear, hear!].

Upon this point, it was not necessary for him to enlarge, since prospects far more gloomy than any he was accustomed to paint could be drawn by gentlemen on the opposite side of the House. Some persons had required that after the struggle, a breathing time should be allowed to the country—he only asked a breathing time to public credit, which was, in truth, almost the same thing. Although, during the last three years, a burthen of 100 millions had been thrown upon the money market by repeated loans, yet he congratulated the House, that it had been accompanied by no increase of taxation. That system he hoped to see continued, and he called upon the House to continue a tax calculated to raise little more than the amount of public burthens which had been saved during the two last years. By the operation of the plan of finance of 1813, the public had been spared the weight of nearly nine millions of permanent taxes, yet the sinking fund had still been preserved effectual for all purposes; it could not, however, at present, sustain any greater pressure, and a loan, he feared, would be attended with most detrimental consequences, more especially to the efficacy of the sinking fund; among the various plans of the hon. baronet (Sir James Shaw) that which proposed a still further diminution of the sinking fund was the least eligible; but with respect to them, all the committee would be aware that whether the money were borrowed in the market, or taken from the sinking fund, the effect of the operation was nearly the same. The politial and military glory of Great Britain had been carried to its utmost height, but it had been attended by a pressure upon her finances from which they could not be relieved without a vigorous exertion. It was true that we had gained a happy and secure peace, but we ought not to be in too great haste to enjoy its advantages: precipitation might be ruinous, while a wholesome restraint, a short delay, would enable us to render our blessings substantial and permanent. The right hon. gentleman concluded by moving a resolution for the continuance of the tax on landed property at the rate of 5 per cent., being the first of a string of Resolutions which he intended to propose for carrying into effect the different modifications he had explained to the committee.

Sir *William Curtis* opposed the motion. He said, that after all he had heard from the right hon. gentleman, his opinion with respect to the tax had not been altered in any one particular. He considered the property tax as a war tax only, and therefore, one which ought to be discontinued in time of peace. So long as its inquisitorial and oppressive nature remained, so long should it meet with opposition from him.

Mr. *William Smith* stated, that the consideration of this tax had long occupied his attention: he had, however, not found an opportunity of addressing the House before, and wished now to deliver his sentiments on the subject. Whether in war or in peace, he had on all occasions denied his assent to this tax: and he thought the objections against it so general, as to apply to all times and all situations. Those objections were not directed against the amount alone, but against the very principle of the tax. As far as the commercial world was concerned, the great evil of the tax consisted in that inquisitorial visiting which laid open to the world, with the most ruinous effect, the exact situation of every man's affairs, however he might wish for concealment. And another important objection, hitherto little dwelt on, was the unfair manner in which incomes arising from professions were rendered subject to this tax. As to commercial men, the disquiet they must experience at having their concerns laid open to the world would be very little alleviated by any of the expedients or modifications now suggested by the right hon. gentleman opposite. It was probable that a large proportion of the commercial interest must now be liable to heavy losses; and it followed that a trader must either pay five per cent. on a supposed profit, or go to the commissioner and confess his loss: rather than do this, numbers would pay the tax, so that it would be a tax, not on income, but on loss. It appeared that 11,000 surcharges had been made in the city of London alone during the course of the last year. It might be said, that this afforded in some degree a presumption of commercial prosperity, but he thought that no such inference could be drawn. Of these 11,000 surcharges, 3,000 were set aside on appeal, after a critical examination into the appellant's circumstances. This had made him a declared enemy to the tax in every shape. Seven thousand out of the 11,000 did not appeal; they probably thought it a less evil to submit to the imposition, than to expose the situation of their affairs. But, suppose that these 7000 were surcharged justly, what a pestilential influence must the tax have produced on the morals of the country, when such a body had recourse to the most guilty evasions to avoid the assessment! The right hon. gentleman had been acting on the old and well known principle of "Divide et impera," for he had made concessions to the agricultural interest in the hopes of gaining their support to his cause. Mr. Smith, however, cautioned gentlemen to consider, not the partial bearings, but the whole effect of the tax; for if every man were to aid the introduction of it who was not himself immediately affected, we might very soon find the burthen effectually saddled on our backs. He would here, too, incidentally hint, that if any members from the sister kingdom were forward in support of this tax, because it did not extend to Ireland, it might be prudent for them to consider whether members here would not soon wish to extend the tax to Ireland. At all events, there was no better mode of creating ill-will between the two countries, than bringing gentlemen from the other side of the channel for the purpose of fixing such an impost on this country. But, to revert to the tax itself, and to consider it according to the principles laid down by the most celebrated political economists—he would assert, that there was not one page of Adam Smith on the subject of taxation, from which a direct argument might not be drawn against this impost,—whether he speaks of capital, of the effect which the accumulation of it has on national prosperity, and the consequent evil arising from its diminution; whether he weighs the ill effect of the discontent excited by an injudicious impost, or expatiates on the evil of making the credit of an individual depend on the testimony of an officer of revenue. If Adam Smith's authority were good for any thing, it would show this tax to be in the highest degree unjust and impolitic. The right hon. gentleman had asserted, that it would be more inconvenient to raise the money required by means of a loan than by direct taxation. Mr. Smith said, he entirely disagreed with the right hon. gentleman on this point. If the money were drawn by a loan, that capital was advanced which was not immediately wanted; if it were raised by a tax, the money was taken indiscriminately, whether the payer wanted it or not: the tradesman who wanted the capital to carry on his business was obliged to pay into the coffers of the state, where it could be productive of no profit to him, instead of the money being advanced by an individual who could afford to lend it. But let the House consider the intolerable inquisition that attended the tax: Mr. Pitt, the year before he brought it forward, spoke of the tax on property as one not recognized in this country; till that time we had taxed only visible property; and nothing but the absolute necessities of the war could offer any extenuation for the inquisition with which this impost visited the most private transactions; but yet without this inquisition the tax would be wholly inefficient. In most taxes the payer was generally repaid with a profit: he advanced the tax on his goods, and was more than indemnified by the higher price which those goods consequently attained; but the income tax affected professions as well as trades, and the lawyer or physician gained no more than their guinea, though equally affected with others by the operation of the tax. It had been stated that the amount of the profits made by 90,000 individuals, who were assessed to the tax at the rate of from 50*l* to 100*l*. per annum each, was 7,000,000*l*. But, however large this sum might appear, the individuals in question formed the very poorest class of society; obliged to contribute to the parish rates, though frequently themselves more in need of assistance than any who received relief. He must therefore oppose the tax in every stage. He should conclude by observing, that Mr. Pitt's ability as a financier had been greatly over-rated. He, as a financier, resembled Buonaparté in war; it was not how, but what he was to raise: Buonaparté never considered how, but the number of men he wished to raise; and he raised them by a conscription. Now, the income tax was a conscription as vexatious and tyrannical upon property as the other was upon life and men. He was a truly great man who from small means could produce great effects; but no man had been more extravagant in his means than Mr. Pitt. Having said thus much, he forbore to enter into the detail of the tax, for this was not the proper time for doing it, and he hoped and believed that time would never arrive. The tax could never, by any detail, by any modification, be rendered palatable to individuals or beneficial to the public.

Mr. *Rose*, amid loud cries of question, proceeded to defend the character of his departed friend, Mr. Pitt, from the attack that had been made upon it by the hon. gentleman who had just sat down. That hon. gentleman had denied Mr. Pitt's financial abilities, and, describing a test by which talents were to be tried, denied that by that test his departed friend could be considered as a great financier [Here an evident impatience was testified by the House, and cries of question were redoubled.] Mr. Rose continued. Shall an attack be permitted on the character of an individual, and shall it not be permitted to his friends to offer any defence? He was willing to adopt the test of the hon. gentleman, and he was persuaded that Mr. Pitt's character would be established by the application of it beyond the reach of question or dispute. The hon. gentleman had said, that great abilities were proved by the accomplishment of great undertakings, through great difficulties, and with small means. Let the House look at the first period of Mr. Pitt's administration, and considering the circumstances in which it commenced, compare them with the state of the country after two years of his exertions and services, and there could not remain a shadow of doubt as to the greatness of his financial character. When he entered upon office at the end of the American war, he found public credit exceedingly depressed, the national resources in a state of great exhaustion, and the revenue of the country insufficient to defray the peace establishment, with the interest of the debt contracted in a long, extensive, and unfortunate struggle. He found it necessary to impose 950,000*l*. of new taxes; but by this addition, by economy, and by an improved collection of the revenue, he not only brought the annual income of the nation to meet the annual expenditure, but provided a million for the sinking fund, which he established in 1786. Before he came into office, the war expenditure exceeded the war revenue by three millions a year. In 1797 the funds had fallen, under the pressure of repeated loans, to 47 and a fraction. It was then, that Mr. Pitt resorted to the property tax to relieve them, and in January 1798 it was proposed. Its effect had answered his expectations, and the funds had recovered. What the hon. gentleman had stated concerning Mr.

Pitt's opinion of the property tax was founded in error, or at least was without authority. He had never called it a war tax, or declared that it could not be continued in peace. So much was his conduct opposed to such a supposition, that he had mortgaged it for 56 millions. Had the interest of this great sum not been provided for from another source by Mr. Addington, who succeeded Mr. Pitt, in 1802, it was calculated that the property tax could not have been disengaged or removed for nine years of peace. He allowed with an honourable alderman, the liberality of the bankers, merchants, and traders of London, in first suggesting this tax, and submitting to it with such cheerfulness; but he denied that there was any pledge given to abolish it at the end of the war. The right hon. gentleman proceeded to show the propriety and necessity of continuing this tax as proposed by the chancellor of the exchequer; but the noise was so great in the House, and the cries of question were so incessantly repeated, that what he said could not be distinctly collected in the gallery.

Mr. *Whitshed Keene* thought the property tax was a good tax, as the expense of collecting was small, and as it did not partake the bad quality of taxes on consumable articles, which raised the prices in a greater proportion than they were productive to the exchequer. He thought if the tax was taken off leather, malt, and other articles of that nature, and laid on property, the subject would be a gainer, even if the property tax were doubled.

Mr. *Hart Davis* supported the tax; he said he did not consider it as a peace tax, but as the means of paying a certain amount of debt, the consequence of the late war. He wished, however, to know whether there would be any provision by which landlords, if they received no rents from their tenants, would be exempted from the operation of the tax. If such a provision was made, he should warmly approve of the tax, because though the tax would operate indirectly on the poor, by depriving them of employ this was less oppressive than a tax directly on them. His majesty's minions [a laugh], he meant ministers [cries of Hear!] had proposed the tax for a limited time only, during which time they might revise the whole system of our taxation, and relieve the country from those taxes which bore most heavily on individuals. He agreed with the chancellor of the exchequer, as to the advantage which, in his luminous statement, he had professed would arise from the uninterrupted operation of the sinking fund, which could not fail to raise the price of stock. This would lower the interest of money, and the fundholders would be more ready to sell out and relieve the country bankers. The effect which it would thus have in raising the prices, would be of much greater advantage to the farmers, than the repeal of so small a tax could be attended with. For though a cow was only raised in price from 10 to 11*l.* this would amount on the stock of a farm of 400*l.* a year, to an increase of value of 150*l.* Under this conviction, he should vote for the tax, though he regretted it was against the sense of his constituents.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that he had in view a provision to relieve landlords who were deprived of their rent by the flight or insolvency of their tenants. He wished also that it should not be understood that because in his general statement he had not mentioned every provision which he had in contemplation, he was unwilling to listen to any thing in the way of modification, which might be suggested. He hoped the House would not come to a hasty decision on the question, without having the proposed bill in a compleat state before them [Cries of Question, question!].

Mr. *Baring* having with some difficulty obtained a hearing, said he should not trespass long on the attention of the committee, as such anxiety prevailed for a coming to decision. In another state of the House he should have wished to go into details; but that seemed now quite impossible. The right hon. the treasurer of the navy (Mr. Rose) was a general panegyrist of all taxes and tax-gatherers—to answer him was quite superfluous. When the hon. member for Bristol (Mr. Hart Davis) rose, he had anticipated that he would find some good reasons for supporting the ministers and deserting his constituents. But from whence he had drawn the conclusion, that the cows of the people of Bristol would be raised by the operation of the tax from 10*l.* to 11*l.* each, it was out of the power of ingenuity to imagine. That hon. member had been lavish in his praise of the "luminous" statement of the chancellor of the exchequer. If he (Mr. B.) had thought that the statement of the chancellor of the exchequer had been any thing but a desperate plunge in default of all argument—and if it had made any impression on the committee, he, though he had not much opinion of his own ability, should have taken up some of the time of the House to refute it. But he should set the member for Bristol right as to one fact connected with that statement. The member for Bristol had supposed that the tax was to last only for two years. The chancellor of the exchequer had that night stated no such thing. Sometimes, indeed, the ministers held forth the promise of the tax being put an end to in two years, but when they felt a little stronger, no such promise was made. This promise was like the French constitution, which had been compared to an umbrella, which was held up by the king in bad weather only. It was now pretended that it was to be continued only for the payment of an uncertain sum, which seemed to be about 14 millions. Was it probable that the tax, pared down as it would be, with little left but its inquisitorial power and its inequality, would produce that sum in two years? It was improbable, as long as the ministers could show any tail of the war expense, that they would give it up. If they could get the tax once fixed in time of peace, they would gain their object, and not a member of that House would ever see an end of it. No one who had the least experience of the conduct of government, could fail to see, that instead of producing a redemption of the debt, it would produce wasteful establishments and extravagant expenditure. It could only be by ridding the country of the tax that ministers could be induced to practise any economy. A right hon. gentleman (Mr. Rose) had compared the distress of the country now to that of 1797; and had argued, that as the distress was removed by imposing the tax then, to impose the tax now would afford the same relief. But between the distress of 1797 and that of the present moment there was no analogy. At that time there was a poor exchequer and a rich country. Now the case was the reverse—we had a rich exchequer and a poor country. The remedy now applied should be the reverse of that applied in 1797. Instead of imposing additional taxes to relieve the exchequer, the object should be to take off as much of the taxes as was possible to relieve the country. Though the chancellor of the exchequer had repeated his story of the miraculous shower of gold, he (Mr. B.) had never met with any man in the country who thought it of great advantage to himself, that money should be taken out of his pocket, and then lent him back. The fact was, the farmers did not want to borrow money—they wanted a market. As to a loan, he should say a few words. The chancellor of the exchequer had said it was the great loans had depressed the stocks. Now it was not the fact that the stocks were very much depressed; for they did not afford more than five per cent. to purchasers, and were gradually rising. Whatever depression there was, had been occasioned by the shrinking of the property of the country. Every man felt such distress or witnessed such distress, that he withdrew his money from the funds for the use of himself, or to lend to his neighbour. What effect, he would ask, could a loan of nine millions have, which perhaps would be melted down in a week into the general transactions of the country? The chancellor of the exchequer had alluded to him (Mr. B.) and the members from the city, and had taken the opportunity of mixing up some little personalities with the question. But he would ask, whether he or any man had proposed an immediate loan? The best measure would be to raise the sum required by exchequer bills, which might be funded at some future time. What the chancellor of the exchequer had not done was to state the financial necessity of the measure. There was no financial necessity for the measure. If all that was wanted was ten millions, no one could say that this was the proper time for laying on a tax to relieve the country two years hence. This was the year when relaxation of taxation was most peculiarly required. It would only be necessary to take one million from the sinking fund to pay the interest of that sum, and a sinking fund of 5 per cent. for its reduction, which would then take place in 12 years. And was it to prevent the taking a million from the sinking fund that the House should turn a deaf ear to the distresses of the country, and ruin their character in the opinion of their constituents? It would be for gentlemen to consider, whether the subtracting of one million was such an inroad on the sinking fund, that it would be preferable to adopt the principle of an income tax in time of peace.

Lord *Castlereagh* said, that at that late hour of the night, he should not have trespassed upon the attention of the committee, did he not feel that he owed it to, himself, to the country, and to the government of which he formed a part, to state the grounds upon which he conceived the present measure ought to be supported. Nothing but an imperious sense of duty could have induced his majesty's ministers to persist in their endeavours to obtain the sanction of parliament for the renewal of the property tax, in opposition to that national reluctance which the people might be supposed to feel at the continuance of a heavy burthen after the termination of the war; more especially when there was in addition a heavy pressure occasioned by distresses arising from particular but temporary causes. But he was sure, at the same time, that the government would be turning its back upon those distresses, if it were to shrink from the discharge of that duty which the necessity of the case imposed upon it. He begged to be understood, in the first instance, as speaking with all due deference of the petitions which had been presented to that House upon the subject; but when he considered what ought to be the influence of those petitions, no one would say that the deliberative faculties of parliament ought to be so limited or paralysed by them, that the legislature of the country was to look to the sentiments entertained beyond the walls of that House for the rule and guide of the course it had to pursue. He was by no means disposed to disparage the character and weight of such opinions; but, at the same time, he was far from thinking that the good sense which always distinguished the people of England had forsaken them on the present occasion, or that they were disposed to turn their backs upon that great financial system which had hitherto carried them through all their difficulties and dangers. If, however, they shrunk from the present effort, they would unquestionably renounce that profound and salutary policy, to which alone they were indebted for the means of so gloriously continuing the late struggle to its final and memorable issue.

With respect to the various matters contained in the different petitions presented, many of the topics embraced in them were quite foreign from the question of the property tax; and he was quite sure if some of them were followed up by concession on the part of parliament, they would shake the security of the empire to its foundation. The property tax was made the ostensible ground for calling meetings together; but when those meetings were obtained, the property tax formed only a single object in the views of the petitioners, while others of a far different nature were mingled with it. He would put an instance in point, which must be fresh in the recollection of gentlemen on the other side of the House. An hon. and learned gentleman had attended a public meeting convened in Westminster for the purpose of petitioning parliament on the subject. But when that hon. and learned gentleman, accompanied by some of his friends, appeared, they could not obtain even a hearing, because, in fact, the meeting was called for purposes totally distinct from the consideration of the property tax. With respect, however, to the petitions generally, there was a great mass of them, and many of a most respectable description. But when he looked at them in the aggregate, and asked himself whether they could be considered as containing the sentiments of the whole people of Great Britain, he was compelled to give his negative to such a proposition. In fact, one-fourth of the counties of great Britain had not petitioned at all. There was not more than nineteen petitions from counties, out of nearly ninety of which Great Britain was composed; and without going into the particular history of those petitions from the different counties, he was justified in affirming, that a great diversity of sentiment prevailed in most of the counties. Then, as to the commercial towns, it was certainly a tax of a very painful nature to them; but he was quite satisfied that the opinion of the commercial body would be much altered when they knew of the modifications which it was intended to introduce into the tax. He wished to impress upon the attention of the House, that full one-third of the whole number of petitions presented, came from two counties only, Devonshire and Middlesex; a circumstance which was explained by the mode of obtaining them in separate parishes. The aggregate amount of petitions was about 400, and 130 came from those two counties. Now, when these circumstances came to be considered, and when it was known that Liverpool and Manchester, and others of the greatest commercial towns in the kingdom were divided upon the subject, and also when it was known how favourably every proposition for a repeal of taxes was sure to be received, he would put it to the House whether the petitions ought to be fairly considered as speaking the unbiassed and collected sense of the people of Great Britain. It should likewise be remembered, the course pursued by gentlemen on the other side of the House, and that sort of influence (just and proper influence he admitted) which persons of great property and high station could always exercise; together with the latitude which they gave themselves in uniformly representing that the country could do altogether without the tax. Above all, it should never be forgotten, that the most unqualified clamour was excited, as he should always be prepared to call it, in the endeavour which was made to establish a deliberate breach of faith on the part of parliament towards the people of England.—When he recollected all those combined circumstances, instead of being astonished that there were so many petitions, he freely owned that his greatest astonishment was to find so few; and he was satisfied, from that very circumstance, that there was a feeling prevailed throughout the country, which would not suffer its confidence to be withdrawn from the government—[Hear, hear!].

With regard to the question of public faith said to be pledged, that part of the subject had been so ably argued by his right hon. friend, that he should not think it necessary to dwell much upon it. He certainly did not mean to say that there was not a strong expectation throughout the country, that the property tax would be remitted upon the termination of the war; and if the government could have remitted it, consistently with what they conceived to be the public interest, they would have been bound to do so. But he would maintain, that it was never in the contemplation of any parliament, when they sanctioned the imposition of that tax, to say, that its continuance in a time of peace should not, under any possible circumstance, be proposed. To argue the question, therefore, as a positive breach of faith on the part of the legislature, was an attempt at delusion unexampled in the history of the country. His right hon. friend, now no more (Mr. Pitt) had actually mortgaged the property tax, during a time of peace, for nine years; and if lord Sidmouth did not continue that mortgage, it was because the small loans which were required in the beginning of the war rendered it unnecessary. He was prepared, however, to affirm again, that it was the deliberate finance plan of lord Henry Petty to mortgage the tax in time of peace. He was not now arguing as to intentions; the question was, whether the plan of lord Henry Petty did not, in its necessary and unavoidable progress, effect that end. It was not to be supposed that any man of common sense would create a specific plan, and would publish finance tables, for the purpose of showing in what particular year that precise effect would take place, which he admitted was a breach of faith between the parliament and the country. Then as to the intention of releasing the tax, at the close of the war, his right hon. friend had stated, that with all the means upon which that administration calculated for such release, still a portion of the tax would inevitably remain pledged. Why, in fact, did lord Henry Petty put the property tax into his tables, if it was not in contemplation to mortgage it? And what were the assignable means for releasing that mortgage? The excesses upon the sinking fund. What was the alternative, if there should be no excesses adequate to that purpose? To have only six millions of clear revenue with which to commence a peace establishment. Besides, what security was there that his successors in office would be disposed to apply all those excesses to the release of the property tax? He would still maintain, however, that it was a delusion to argue that they who thus put the property tax into the finance tables, were guilty of any breach of faith. They did not indeed require any defence in his opinion, for he had never imputed any charge to them: he had never imputed to them the intention of keeping the war taxes mortgaged if they could avoid it. But he did think, that by giving such assurances as they held out to the country, they ran the risk of disappointing the expectations they excited. The hon. member who spoke last had taken some pains to create an impression in the House, as if his right hon. friend had held a vague and indistinct language as to the purpose for which the tax was now wanted; and that if he succeeded in obtaining its renewal, it would be made a permanent peace tax, instead of being applied to certain expenses of the war yet unliquidated. But he would put it to the candour and the recollection of the House, whether his right hon. friend did not explicitly state that government looked to the property tax for the extinction of remaining war expenses, which being accomplished the tax was to cease.

He would now advert to the degree of relief which the country ought to expect from ministers, and which parliament ought to permit ministers to grant. In order to place the subject distinctly before the House, he would shortly state, in round numbers, what was the financial condition of the country, reverting first to the expenditure and charge. The expense for the present year was calculated at about thirty millions sterling. The country, however, had good grounds to hope that next year that expense would be diminished one third, reducing the whole expenditure to twenty millions. He stated the sums in round numbers, because they would answer all the purposes of argument, and he was sure the House would not expect him, at that moment, to go into minute and elaborate calculations. And while upon that branch of the subject it would be well to observe, that all the difference between ministers and gentlemen on the other side of the House, with respect to economy and retrenchment, did not involve a greater sum than two millions. If every plan of reduction and saving which they had suggested were carried to its full extent, it would not produce a saving to a greater amount than what he had stated. Whether, therefore, the argument went upon a peace expenditure of twenty or of eighteen millions, in reference to future years, it did not make any essential alteration in the great principle which ought to guide their financial operations. Now, what was the clear revenue of the country? The amount of taxes, and the surplus of the consolidated fund, did not in round numbers exceed six millions. He meant nett revenue. Instead, therefore, of having the war taxes mortgaged and bound up for a number of years, they came to the consideration of their financial condition, after a protracted and expensive war, with a clear, unincumbered revenue of six millions a year; to which were to be added the war taxes, and the property tax, making altogether twenty-eight millions. He was then to be understood as speaking of the property tax at ten per cent. The House would next consider what were the charges which the revenue had to meet, and what were the means which it had of meeting them. There was a revenue of twenty-eight millions applicable to an expenditure of thirty millions, for the present year; and for future years, an expenditure of twenty millions. Looking to the latter amount, what was the extent of relief proposed to be granted to the country? Eight millions were taken off at once; seven millions by the reduction of the property tax to one half, and one million by the reduction of various agricultural taxes. That was the amount of what would be remitted in the very first year, being very nearly one-third of the whole revenue of the state; and it was to be remembered, that it was only by loans from the bank, and by the surplus of the grants of last year, that they were enabled to afford that relief. As to any further extent of relief, he would put it to the House and the country, whether more could fairly be expected. If the property tax were given up, it should be recollected that the country must borrow twelve millions in lieu of it, not six millions, as they could not put out of the calculation the loan from the bank. For his own part he must declare, that if the country could so far forget its own best interests as to place a peace establishment of eighteen millions upon a revenue of only nine millions, all those great principles of finance would be at once abandoned, which had hitherto been considered as essential to the preservation of the state. They would remain stationary in their debts, without any gradual reduction of them, and they would precipitate themselves into all the dangers that inevitably result from an imperfect system of finance. As to a relief from the sinking fund, about which so much had been said, gentlemen talked of that fund as if it had arrived at a magnitude which would justify them in dismissing all further fears concerning it, and that they might put their hands upon the sacred deposit without scruple. He hoped, however, they would allow him to suggest to their consideration what was the actual amount of that fund at the present moment, exclusively of the portion which belonged to Ireland. The amount of the fund did not exceed 11,200,000*l*., and if any application of it were meant to the current exigencies of the government, the country would be in the situation of having a debt of about 700 millions, towards the reduction of which no progress would be made in a time of peace. He therefore did most solemnly entreat and conjure the House, that before they resolved to gain relief to the country, they would recollect the great principles of finance upon which the greatness and prosperity of the empire rested; and that they would not press the adoption of a system which, however specious and delusive at the moment, was one for which the country itself, he was sure, would not thank them hereafter. It was upon that ground he felt himself called upon, by every sense of duty which he owed to himself, to parliament, and to the nation, to press the present measure, not merely as expedient, but as absolutely necessary for the safety and well-being of the state. Unless a stimulus was given to the public funds, it would be impossible to keep every branch of industry throughout the country from stagnating. He wished the House to recollect, that if they did not give the government that aid, they must contract debts to the amount of twelve millions for the present year. With respect to future years, the amount might vary. Next year they would be compelled to make a loan of from six to eight millions, and if they made loans in time of peace so near the amount of the sinking fund, they would be abandoning all those great principles of finance which had hitherto sustained the credit of the country. He would put to the good sense of the country, to the truly British spirit which animated the people, whether they would now shrink from the exertion which was necessary for their own preservation; whether they would, in fact, be so infatuated as to turn their backs upon themselves?—[Hear, hear!]. He trusted their ultimate decision would be favourable to those great principles of financial calculation to which he had already alluded; and though an impression might prevail, at the moment, unfavourable to the government, he had no doubt the nation would finally do justice to a line of policy dictated by a sacred sense of duty, and that they would co-operate in the promotion of a measure necessary to secure the stability, the safety, and the lasting prosperity of the whole empire.

Mr. *Brougham* rose, amid loud cries of chair, chair, and question, question, to reply to the personal insinuations of the noble lord, with respect to a transaction in which he was concerned. The fact was, he went to the Westminster meeting merely as a spectator, and in no other capacity, for he had no right to address that meeting, having no vote for Westminster, nor being a housekeeper in that city. He left the meeting before one single observation was made, either upon himself, or any of his noble and honourable friends, and not in consequence of such observations, as seemed to be the opinion of the noble lord. The assertion was therefore on a par with that of the noble lord, that only 19 out of the 90 counties (thus doubling the number of the counties in England) had petitioned. With respect to the appeal attempted by the noble lord to divert the attention of the independent part of the House, those who were unconnected with any party, it would fail as it deserved. For neither he, nor those independent men cared what pledges Mr. Pitt, lord Grenville, or lord Henry Petty, might have given and forfeited; they looked at the pledge recorded in the journals of the House. Instead of having recourse to the constant recrimination of parties, he should apply to those records, and terminate his appeal by reading the pledge which they contained, in the 247th section of that act. He then read from the journals of the House the following clause in the Property Tax Act: "Be it enacted, that this Act shall commence and take effect from the 5th of April, 1806, and that the said Act and the duties thereof shall continue in force during the present war, and until the 6th of April next after the definitive signature of a treaty of peace, and no longer." [Shouts of Hear, hear, hear! and repeated cries of Question, question!].

Mr. *Wilberforce* conceived it fair to conclude, that ministers were actuated by what they considered a strong sense of duty, in persevering in a measure so unpopular. Yet, after the concession of his noble friend, that a great feeling of expectation had been entertained by the country that the tax would expire with the war, he thought its renewal would be harsh under any circumstances. But, under what circumstances was it proposed, when it was rather expected that a bonus would be given to the people? His noble friend had given a tremendous view of the subject. If he understood him rightly, he had shown that at the end of two years the necessity for the continuance of the tax would be as strong as it was now said to be. He had therefore proved too much. He had proved that the country would never obtain the relief which it ought to receive, and that the only means of gaining it, was the curtailment of her expenditure. [Repeated shouts of Hear, hear, hear, for several minutes.] The question was, which should be relieved, the money market, or the people? When the people of England should know the amount thus imposed on them, they would think that the House had been carried away by speculations on general principles, and had not felt for but contemned those distresses, which were very great indeed, and were increased, as his noble friend himself had said, by the confident expectation of relief—an expectation which would have been sacrificed to the wish of assisting the money market. [Here the shouts of Hear! hear! were so frequent, and the anxiety of the House to divide, so tumultuous, that little more became audible in the gallery, but by the thundering peal which attended the close of the hon. member's speech, it was understood that he had once more expressed his determination to vote against the tax.]

The House then divided:

For the continuance of the Property Tax 201
Against it 238
Majority against the continuance of the Property Tax .... —37

As soon as the numbers were announced in the House, a loud cheering took place, which continued for several minutes. Similar exultation was manifested by the crowd of strangers in the lobby and the avenues of the House.

List of the Majority.

Abercrombie, hon. J.
Althorp, viscount
Anson, hon. sir G.
Astell, Wm.
Atherley, A.
Ashurst, W. H.
Atkins, John
Allan, Alexander
Babington, Thos.
Baillie, J. E.
Barclay, Charles
Baring, sir T.
Baring, Alex.
Bastard, E. P.
Beach, M. H.
Beach, W. H.
Bennet, hon. H. G.
Baker, John
Birch, Joseph
Bolland, John
Boughey, sir J. F.
Brand, hon. T.
Brooke, Charles
Brougham, H.
Browne, Ant.
Burdett, sir F.
Burrell, hon. P. D.
Burrell, sir C.
Burrell, Walter
Blackburne, John
Blackburne, J. I.
Butterworth, Jos.
Byng, George
Caulfield, hon. H.
Calcraft, John
Calley, Thos.
Calvert, Charles
Campbell, lord J.
Campbell, hon. J.
Campbell, general
Cavendish, lord G.
Cavendish, hon. H.
Cavendish, hon. C.
Chaloner, Robt.
Chetwode, sir J.
Cochrane, lord
Cocks, hon. J. S.
Cocks, James
Coote, sir Eyre
Coke, Thomas
Coke, E.
Cotes, John
Crickett, R. A.
Curtis, sir W.
Cotterell, sir John
Dickinson, Wm.
Doveton, Gabriel
Douglas, hon. F. S.
Douglas, W. R. K.
Dowdeswell, J. E.
Drummond, G. H.
Dugdale, D. S.
Duncannon, visc.
Duncombe, C.
Dundas, hon. L.
Dundas, Charles
Dunlope, James
Ebrington, viscount
Egerton, sir J. G.
Elliot, rt. hon. W.
Ellison, Cuthbert
Evelyn, Lyndon
Fazakerley, J. N.
Fellowes, hon. N.
Fergusson, sir R. C.
Fane, John
Finlay, Kirkman
Fitzgerald, lord W.
Fitzroy, lord J.
Foley, hon. A.
Foley, T.
Folkes, sir M. B.
Forbes, Charles
Frank, Frank
Franco, Ralph
Folkestone, lord
Fynes, Henry
Gascoyne, Isaac
Gaskell, Benj.
Gordon, Robt.
Graham, sir J.
Grenfell, Pascoe
Grenville, rt. hon. T.
Guise, sir Wm.
Harcourt, John
Harvey, Charles
Hall, Benj.
Hammersley, Hugh
Hanbury, W.
Heathcote, sir G.
Heron, sir Robert
Hornby, E.
Holdsworth, A. H.
Horne, Wm.
Howard, hon. W.
Howorth, H.
Hughes, W. L.
Hurst, Robt.
Jervoise, J. J.
Jones, John
Keck, G. A. L.
Kerrison, sir E.
King, sir J. D.
Knox, Thos.
Lambton, John
Langton, W. G.
Leader, Wm.
Lefevre, C. S.
Lemon, sir Wm.
Lester, B. L
Lewis, Frankland
Lloyd, sir E.
Lloyd, J. M.
Lowndes, Wm.
Lopez, sir M.
Lubbock, sir John
Lyttelton, hon. W.
Lyster, Richard
Macdonald, James
Macdonald, R. G.
Mackintosh, sir J.
Manning, Wm.
Madocks, W. A.
Maitland, hon. A.
Manners, lord C.
Marryat, Joseph
Martin, Henry
Martin, John
Methuen, Paul
Mills, Charles
Milton, viscount
Monck, sir C.
Montgomery, sir J.
Moore, Peter
Mordaunt, sir C.
Morgan, sir C.
Morgan, Charles
Morland, S. B.
Morpeth, viscount
Morrit, J. B.
Mostyn, sir Thos.
Molyneux, H. H.
Newman, R. W.
Neville, hon. R.
Newport, sir John
North, Dudley
Northey, William
Nugent, Lord
Osborne, lord F.
Ossulston, lord
Owen, sir John
Palmer, colonel
Patten, B. P.
Peel, sir R.
Peirse, Henry
Pelham, hon. C. A.
Pelham, hon. G. A.
Pellew, hon. P. B.
Philips, George
Pechell, sir T.
Piggott, sir A.
Plunkett, rt. hon. W. C.
Pollington, visc.
Ponsonby, rt. hon. G.
Ponsonby, hon. F. C.
Powlett, hon. W. V.
Preston, Richard
Price, Richard
Prittie, hon. F. A.
Pym, Francis
Ramsden, J. C.
Rancliffe, lord

Rashleigh, William
Richardson, Wm.
Ridley, sir M. W.
Romilly, sir S.
Rowley, sir W.
Russell, lord Wm.
Russell, lord J.
Russell, R. G.
Russell, M.
St. Paul, sir H.
St. Paul, H. H.
Sebright, sir J.
Scudamore, R. P.
Sharp, R.
Shelley, sir T.
Simeon, sir John
Smith, John
Smith, George
Smith, Sam.
Smith, Abel
Smith, Christ.
Smith, T. Ashton
Smith, William
Smyth, J. H.
Shaw, sir J.
Staniforth, John
Stanley, lord
Spiers, Arch.
Simeon, George
Taylor, Ch.
Taylor, M. A.
Tierney, rt. hon. G.
Townshend, lord C.
Townshend, lord J.
Thompson, Thos.
Thornton, Wm.
Tyrwhit, T. D.
Tyrwhit, W. D.
Vyse, R. W. H.
Waldegrave, hon. W.
Walpole, hon. gen.
Warre, John A.
Webster, sir G.
Wedderburn, sir D.
Wellesley, W. P. T. L.
Western, Ch. C.
Wharton, John
Whitmore, Thos.
Wilkins, Walter
Williams, Owen
Williams, sir R.
Williams, R.
Wilberforce, Wm.
Wright, J. A.
Wynn, sir W. W.
Wynn, Charles W.
Wyatt, C.

TELLER.

Fremantle, Wm.

PAIRED OFF.

Halsey, Joseph
Miller, sir Thomas
Winnington, sir T.
Bradshaw, R. H.
Horner, Francis
Russell, lord G. W.
Tavistock, Marquis
Davenport, Davies
Markham, admiral
Shaw, B.
Hamilton, sir H. D.
Geary, sir W.
Grosvenor, general
Onslow, Mr. serjeant

List of the Minority.

Abercrombie, R.
Acland, sir T.
Addington, right hon. J. H.
Alexander, J.
Apsley, lord
Arbuthnot, rt. hon. C.
Anstruther, sir J.
Beaumont, col.
Bagwell, rt. hon. W.
Bankes, H.
Barne, M.
Bathurst, rt. hon. C.
Beresford, lord G.
Binning, lord
Blachford, B. P.
Blake, V.
Bloomfield, sir B.
Bourne, W. S.
Bridport, lord
Broadhead, T. H.
Brooke, C.
Brydges, sir E.
Buller, J.
Buller, sir E.
Bruen, H.
Cockerell, sir C.
Calvert, J.
Calvert, N.
Canning, G.
Cartwright, W. R.
Castlereagh, visct.
Chute, W.
Chaplin, C.
Clements, J. H.
Clerke, sir G.
Clive, visct.
Clive, H.
Colquhoun, A.
Courtenay, W.
Courtenay, T. P.
Cranbourne, lord
Croker, J. W.
Curzon, hon. R.
Cawthorne, J. F.
Dashwood, G.
Davies, H.
Davies, H. jun.
Dawkins, H.
Dawson, G.
Delgarno, J.
Douglas, W.
Drummond, J.
Dufferin, lord
Duigenan, P.
Dundas, rt hon. W.
Duncombe, C.
De Roos, H. W. J.
Denys, sir G.
Egerton, W.
Ellison, R.
Elmley, visct.
Estcourt, T. G.
Fane, sir H.
Farquhar, J.
Farmer, S.
Faulkner, sir F.
Ferguson, J.
Featherstone, sir T.
Finch, hon. E.
Fitzgerald, rt. hon. V.
Foster, J. L.
Folkes, E.
Frazer, C. M.
Giddy, D.
Glerawly, lord
Garrow, sir W.
Gipps, G.
Goulding, E.
Gooch, T. S.
Goulburn, H.
Gower, earl
Grant, C.
Grant, C. jun.
Grant, A.
Graves, lord
Gell, P.
Hart, general
Hill, sir G.
Holford, G. P.
Holmes, sir L.
Holmes, W.
Honeyman, R.
Hope, hon. A.
Hope, sir G.
Houblon, J. A.
Hume, sir A.
Huskisson, W.
Howard, Greville
Jackson, sir J.
Jenkinson, hon. C.
Jolliffe, H.
Irving, J.
Jocelyn, visct.
Kirkwall, visct.
Lacon, E. K.
Lamb, T. P.
Leigh, J. H.
Leigh, C.
Lyttleton, E. J.
Lockhart, J.
Lockhart, W. E.
Loftus, W.
Long, rt. hon. C.
Lovaine, lord
Lowther, lord
Lowther, J.
Lowther, hon. H.
Lushington, S. R.
Macnaughten, E. N.
Maginnis, R.
Marjoribanks, sir J.
March, earl
May, sir S.
Meade, hon. J.
Mellish, W.
Moore, lord H.
Morris, R.
Moorsom, R.
Munday, E. M.
Neale, sir H.
Napier, J.
Newark, visct.
Nicholl, sir J.
Onslow, T. C.
Osborn, J.
Paget, hon. E.
Paget, hon. C.
Paget, hon. B.
Palmer, J.
Palmerston, visct.
Peel, rt. hon. R.
Percy, hon. J.
Phipps, hon. E.
Pitt, W. M.
Pitt, T.
Pocock, W.
Pole, rt. hon. W. W.
Pringle, sir W.
Protheroe, E.
Pennant, J. D.
Riddell, sir J.
Robinson, J.
Robinson, rt. hon. F.
Rose, rt. hon. G.
Round, J.
Ryder, rt. hon. R.
Scott, sir W.
Scott, S.
Seymour, lord R.
Shepherd, sir S.
Singleton, M.
Somerville, sir M.
Spencer, sir B.
Stewart, sir W.
Stirling, sir W.
Sutton, rt. hon. C. M.
Sykes, sir M.
Sullivan, rt. hon. J.
Sumner, G. H.
Swan, H.
Taylor, J.
Teed, J.
Thornton, S.
Thynn, lord J.
Tomline, E.
Townshend, hon. W.
Trefusis, hon. C. R.
Tremayne, J. H.
Vansittart, rt. hon. N.
Vanderheyden, D.
Vernon, G. G. V.
Vernon, G. V.
Wallace, rt. hon. T.
Walpole, lord
Ward, R.
Warrender, sir G.
Wemyss, gen.

Weatherell, C.
White, M.
Wigram, R.
Wilbraham, E. B.
Wilder, F.
Wilson, T.
Wise, A.
Wood, T.
Wortley, Stuart
Wrottesley, H.
Yorke, rt. hon. C.
Yorke, sir J.

TELLER.
Long, rt. hon. C.

PAIRED OFF.
Fitzhugh, W.
Keene, W.
Clive, ——
Fane, genl.
Leslie,—
Bankes, H.
Bentinck.—
Worcester, marq. of
Disbrowe, E.
Strahan, A.
Compton, earl
Milne, R.
Neville, R.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, March 20.

INSOLVENT DEBTORS.] Mr. *Lockhart* presented a petition from certain inhabitants of the parish of St. Mary-le-bone, praying for the repeal of the Insolvent Debtors' Act. He took the opportunity of repeating his opinion as to the effects of this act, which he considered most mischievous. The House, he said, would be surprised to learn, that it appeared from an authentic return, that the amount of the debts of the persons who had been discharged under this act was 5,597,859*l.*, while the aggregate amount of the available property of these persons was only 1,459*l.*

Mr. *Brougham* said, he held in his hand a petition, to which he wished to call the attention of the House. It was signed by 5000 persons, merchants and traders in the city of Westminster—by the most respectable part of the population of that great and respectable city. This petition might be said, in the truest sense of the words, to speak the sentiments of the inhabitants of Westminster. The prayer of the petition was for the repeal of the insolvent debtors' act, an act under which the most enormous abuses seemed to have been committed. There was one circumstance which he must mention to the House, as it was chiefly upon it that the petitioners grounded their application, and as it would impress the House with the absolute necessity of a thorough revision of the statute. It would scarcely be believed, that during the three years previous to the 1st of February last, persons had been discharged under this act, the whole amount of whose debts was the enormous sum of 5,597,859*l.* By the operation of this act, debts had been washed away—claims had been cut down—persons had got rid of just demands upon them, almost all of which were what are called simple contract debts, to this prodigious amount. And what were the funds extracted for the payment of those debts? It was usual to talk of a shilling in the pound as a miserable composition; but there was no coin current in this kingdom small enough to denominate the rate of composition paid by the persons discharged under the provisions of this statute. He had tried to calculate the rate of it by fractions of a farthing, and he found that the amount of the property extracted from the persons so discharged made a composition at the rate of about the one-fourth or one-fifth part of a farthing in the pound. The whole amount paid was the miserable sum of 1,459*l.* 10*s.* 4*d.* This statement would show the necessity of instituting some inquiry as to this act.

Mr. *Abercrombie* thought that the statement of his hon. and learned friend was highly deserving the attention of the House; but the present was not the proper time to discuss the measure. He would therefore only now say, that he had reason to believe, on authority which he could not doubt, that the statement which had been made by his hon. and learned friend was very much exaggerated. It would be proper, after the committee had received evidence on the subject, to consider well how much of this evil was owing to the negligence of creditors in not taking advantage of the provisions of the act, and to compare that with the inconveniencies which could fairly be ascribed to the act itself. He thought that much of the evil was owing to the creditors themselves.

Mr. *Brougham* repeated his statement, and maintained, against the authority of his hon. and learned friend, that every syllable of it was correct. He could not think how creditors could be so negligent of their own interests as to overlook any of the provisions of the act by which they might benefit. This seemed to him quite a riddle. However, it was matter for inquiry in the committee, to which, when the House heard the petition read, it would, he had no doubt, be disposed to refer it.

The petition was ordered to be referred to the select committee appointed to inquire into the effects which have been produced by the insolvent acts of the 53rd and 54th of the King.

DISCONTINUANCE OF THE WAR MALT TAX.] The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* rose, for the purpose of giving notice that on Monday next, in the committee of ways and means, he intended to propose the continuance of certain of the assessed taxes, but that he did not intend to propose any continuance of the war duties upon malt [Cries of Hear, hear!]. The House would be aware that after he had been deprived of one of the greatest resources on which he had calculated, it could not be expected that he should dispense with any of the means that remained. In consequence of the decision it would be necessary to have recourse to the money market; and when this change in the financial regulations of the year became necessary by his being deprived of so great a resource as the property tax, it was of little consequence that the loan should be increased by the amount of the calculated produce of the malt duty. From the petitions that had been presented to the House; from the able and luminous statements that had been made by several hon. members; and from the conversations which he had held on this subject, with persons the best informed as to the state of the agricultural interest, he was convinced that this part of the community would now feel that the most effectual relief was afforded them by the relinquishment of this tax. He was therefore willing to give the country the relief in this respect which was so much required, and to rely on the wisdom of parliament to supply the means which would be required in consequence of these arrangements [Hear, hear!]. With respect to another tax, which was not unimportant to the agricultural interest, namely, the husbandry horse duty, having already given a pledge to the country that this should undergo some favourable modifications, it was not his intention to abandon that pledge; but, under the present circumstances, he should not feel himself at liberty to propose the relinquishment of any of the remaining resources of the country [Hear, hear!].

Mr. *Coke*, of Norfolk, hailed the moment at which the war duty on malt was to expire, as the most auspicious which could occur for the relief and encouragement of the agricultural interests of this country. He considered this concession the more acceptable, because, from what had fallen from the chancellor of the exchequer on the first day on which he proposed the continuance of the tax on income, it appeared that the only relief he intended to give the agriculturalist, was a diminution of the tax one-half. Nothing could have exceeded the distress which prevailed among this class, and nothing could afford them more substantial satisfaction than the course now proposed to be taken, in the contemplation of which no individual in the country could feel more cordial delight than himself. He still firmly believed, however, that this was not so great a relinquishment as might be supposed. The produce of the war malt duty, he believed, was about 2,700,000*l*. This sum would be made up by the increased market for barley. The lower classes would be able to enjoy a wholesome beverage, at a much less expense than heretofore; the consumption of malt beer would consequently increase, and the old duty would be proportionately more productive. There were also advantages of a more satisfactory nature, and these would arise from the renewed cultivation of those lands which were alone capable of growing barley, rye, and inferior oats, and could not be used in the growth of wheat, which had been thrown out of use altogether, by the weight of the present taxation. The consequence to the farmers in Norfolk, where the land was poorer than in any other part of Great Britain, would be peculiarly important, as they would be able to bring into cultivation land which heretofore would not recompense them for their labour. While on his legs, he could not help adverting to an expression used by the noble lord opposite in the course of the discussion of the income tax, which, however objectionable, he could not but think was in some measure to be justified. He alluded to the expression, "an ignorant impatience of taxation." The noble lord had, on a recent occasion, been down into the county of Norfolk, and from the distresses, of which he must have been an eye-witness, no doubt saw a considerable degree of impatience. This impatience, however, had been carried to a length in two instances to which he was about to advert, of which perhaps the noble lord might have heard—namely, the fact of two of his own tenants, from the impatience which they felt under the burthens by which they were oppressed, having actually destroyed themselves. This certainly was an ignorant impatience, which justified the noble lord's remark—as these men had shown an ignorant impatience in not waiting to see what parliament would do to relieve their distresses. The hon. gentleman concluded by saying, that no man rejoiced more than he did in the intention announced by the chancellor of the exchequer.

Lord *Castlereagh* was sorry, at a time when a communication so satisfactory as that which had been made by his right hon. friend, that any disposition should exist to revive a subject which could be attended with no good effect. He thought that no acrimonious disposition ought to be excited on the present occasion, and was therefore much surprised that the hon. member who had just sat down should have introduced into his speech a misrepresentation of an expression used by him on a former occasion. This was not the first attempt that had been made on the other side of the House to represent expressions which had been applied only to the conduct of gentlemen opposite, as being used towards the nation at large. He had accused the honourable members of endeavouring to clamour down certain taxes; and it was against this conduct on their part, and not to any thing passing out of doors, that he had used some such expression as that imputed to him. As to the occurrence which the hon. gentleman had mentioned at the end of his speech, he could only say, that he had never before heard of it. But, with reference to the construction put upon his words, he begged now to state explicitly, that the expression which had been so often repeated, had been applied by him only to the gentlemen opposite, and not to any thing out of doors.

Mr. *Brand* only rose to express his satisfaction at the communication made by the chancellor of the exchequer respecting the cessation of the war malt tax. He understood that the act would expire twelve months after the conclusion of a treaty of peace; and therefore it would cease some time in July.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that the act would expire on the 26th of July, and that it would be very expedient that some arrangement should be made as to repayments owing to the time when it would cease. He took that opportunity of asking the hon. member for Essex to postpone his motion for a committee on the distressed state of agriculture which stood for to-morrow, as it might be inconvenient for many members t attend.

Mr. *Western*, so far from having any objection, had intended to propose the postponement of his motion till to-morrow se'nnight. He then moved that the order of the day should be read for the purpose of postponing it.

General *Fergusson* wished to state, on the part of Scotland, that the cessation of the malt tax would only afford a very partial relief to the distress in that part of the kingdom; which was so great as to call urgently for some effectual remedy.

Mr. *Ponsonby* said, it was a subject of a particular satisfaction, that the course taken by the right hon. the chancellor of the exchequer had arisen out of the exertions of the people themselves, and not because his majesty's ministers were inclined to make any thing like a liberal concession. If the right hon. gentleman and his colleagues had been left to themselves, he knew, and the country knew, that neither the malt nor the income tax would have been abandoned. The people owed these important circumstances to themselves; and he hoped it would be an eternal lesson to the people of England, that when they were true to themselves, and declared their sentiments to their representatives, and their representatives attended to those sentiments, they would compel the ministers of the Crown to yield to their wishes. The right hon. the chancellor of the exchequer could not afford to part with six millions of the property tax, and yet now he was about to part with two millions more, making a total of eight millions within the year. He hoped the right hon. gentleman would not only find it necessary to part with both of these taxes, but also with all those expenses for which the property tax was intended to provide. If the people would follow up their exertions with regard to the public expenditure, he was satisfied they would obtain just as much success.

Lord *Castlereagh* said, that if the right hon. gentleman had been in his place when his right hon. friend had explained the circumstances under which he had given up the war malt duty, he would not have spoken so confidently, or in a tone so elevated. He would not have triumphed so loudly in what he was pleased to term a concession arising out of the exertions of the people. His right hon. friend had never disguised from himself the pressure which was experienced by all classes in the country; but the grounds on which he had agreed to remit the war tax on malt were these:—Having failed in retaining that tax in a modified shape, which he was satisfied was alone calculated to support the credit of the country, and as his majesty's government were bound to find the ways and means for the year in some way or other, and were consequently forced into the money market, it became a matter of indifference whether they took a loan of six or eight millions. This it was which induced them to feel, as their system for sustaining the credit of the country had been broken in upon, that it was unnecessary to continue the war malt duty. The principle being once destroyed, it was in vain to endeavour to uphold it by the continuance of a partial measure. His own feeling as to this tax was, that if all classes of the community had been ready to pay it, and if parliament had thought proper to enact it, the measure would have been wise, politic, and just. But when the members of the House thought proper to relieve themselves (he did not use the expression in an invidious sense, but because the tax was one which justified these words as affecting the upper classes of society most heavily)—then ministers found it necessary to make some change in their measures for the relief of the people. He protested before the House and the country, that he thought, under the present circumstances of the country, that the decision of parliament, as to this tax had been unwise [Hear, hear!]. For if parliament had granted it under the modifications proposed, his firm conviction was, that the distresses of the country would have been more effectually relieved, and the finances of the country would have been established on the firmest basis. After parliament had decided against this tax, it would certainly have been unwise to have adhered to the malt tax, as there was so general an impression that its cessation would afford much relief, and its relinquishment could make very little difference under the new financial arrangements which became necessary.

Mr. *Gooch* was desirous of joining in the general satisfaction at the repeal of the war duties on malt. He begged to add, that he had hitherto supported all the measures of his majesty's government during the progress of the war; they must, however, depend no longer upon his support, if that was worth their consideration, unless they proceeded to act upon a system of the most rigid economy [Hear, hear!].

Mr. *Brougham* said, the extraordinary observations of the noble lord were almost obliterated from his mind by the gratitude he felt towards the hon. member who spoke last for the pledge which he had just given. If that pledge should be redeemed by the hon. member, and the other representatives of the landed interest should imitate his example, there would then be a chance of saving the country; and be the minister who he might, that House would possess the means of compelling the Crown to observe a system of general economy. He understood the hon. member to mean, that his support of his majesty's ministers would in future be in proportion to the measures they adopted for redeeming the pledge held out in the speech from the throne at the commencement of the session, and the consequences of neglecting which, he apprehended, would be too frightful to be described. It now appeared that the malt tax was to be taken off only because the property tax could not be carried, or according to the statement of the right hon. gentleman, that a small relief to the amount of two millions was necessary, after a great relief to the amount of six. He believed it to be nothing more than an attempt to take credit for that which, if ministers had not done voluntarily, the will of parliament and the sense of the country would have extorted from them. The right hon. gentleman and the noble lord still thought highly of the merits of the property tax; and if so, why did they not again submit it to the consideration of parliament? Other measures had been carried, to which the House had expressed its aversion in the first instance; but the noble lord well knew, that on this subject the decision was final—that he and his tax had been completely defeated. To this he attributed the subdued tone of ministers; and if the rejection of the property tax was a reason for repealing other obnoxious duties, on the principle, that if there was a loan at all, its amount was of little importance, he wished to know what objection could exist to the repeal in particular of the leather tax. Upon their own principle, they were bound to take off every burthen, the pressure of which was felt either in agriculture or by the lower classes of society.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he would leave it to the House to judge whether, in the tone of his noble friend, there had been any thing to justify the observations of the hon. and learned gentleman who had spoken last respecting the decision of the House on the property tax. If the House had approved of the plan which he had proposed, he felt convinced that it would have been the best foundation for our financial system, and would have afforded a permanent relief to the distresses under which the country now laboured. He, however, considered the decision of the House so final upon the subject that he had no intention again to appeal to it. He hoped, with as much sincerity as the most sanguine, that the repeal of the malt duties would contribute greatly to the relief of agriculture, and, above all, to the comforts of the lower classes.

Sir *Francis Burdett* expressed his joy at the relief which would be afforded by the discontinuance of the malt tax. When the House had least expected it they had got rid of two most oppressive taxes. Indeed ministers seemed to be in such a fair way, that he feared that the noble lord, after having said that the safety of the country so much depended on the income tax—that it was to stand or fall by that tax—(for his own part he thought the country was likely to stand merely because the tax had fallen)—that the noble lord was going to state, that himself and his colleagues were going out of office [A laugh].

Mr. *Methuen*, noticing the expression of the noble lord, that the income tax was one which fell chiefly upon the higher orders, said, he could not sit still and hear such a statement without contradicting it. He maintained it was a tax which fell most heavily upon the labouring and lower classes of the community.

Lord *Lascelles* could not refrain from expressing his satisfaction at the intention of discontinuing the malt tax. He could not sit down without noticing what had been said by a right hon. gentleman opposite, which went so far as to lay it down, that in proportion as government or the House should consider what relief could be afforded to the country, the people were to be called upon to petition for more relief. This was a proposition so extraordinary and so untenable, that he was astonished how it could be advanced. It must be obvious, that at the conclusion of a war there were many expenses which for a time it would be necessary to incur; and therefore that the country could not be at once relieved of taxes to such an extent as was to be expected during peace. He protested against the new doctrine, that petitions were to be continued in proportion as relief was granted.

Mr. *Hart Davis* entirely agreed with the noble lord in the propriety of considering the situation of the poor by an abandonment of the malt duties, now that the House had relieved itself and the upper classes by rejecting the property tax [Hear, hear!]. He fully agreed with the noble lord (Castlereagh) that this was the character of the course which the House had taken.

Sir *John Newport* did not wonder that gentlemen who had taken no part in the glorious victory which had been obtained by the House, and who stood among the minority against the important question which had been decided on Monday night, should now endeavour to take some credit to themselves by a participation in the hardly wrung additional benefit which had been obtained by the public. The hon. gentleman who had just sat down, in defiance of the facts which were before the House, had recourse to the hacknied and stale proposition, that the rich, and not the poor, were affected by the property tax. Although this fallacious statement might have excited a mob to speak in favour of the tax in the city of Bristol, the hon. gentleman might rest assured that it would have no weight with that House or with any thinking man, without it. The proposition was *prima facie* not true, for it was clear, from every information that could be collected, that the poor were equally affected with the rich. The argument of the hon. gentleman and of the noble lord on this occasion savoured rather of that revolutionary doctrine which was promulgated by the French convention—which said war to the palace and peace to the cottage. It was, in fact, an attempt to delude the people and the country into an opinion, that the House had not been desirous of protecting their interests. The right hon. baronet then proceeded to suggest the expediency of members paying obedience to the wishes of their constituents, and if such an obedience could not be observed with a due regard to their own feelings, to surrender the trust into other hands.

Mr. *Rose* could not sit still and hear it said, that the property tax affected the poor as much as the rich; this he utterly denied. No gentleman who considered the state of great land-holders and stock-holders would say, that they were not more relieved by the abandonment of the tax than the poor. He admitted, that the middling class of traders were much oppressed, from the exposure of their affairs, which necessarily took place under the provisions of the late act; but he still maintained, that it was the rich who suffered most from its existence. As to the observation of the right hon. baronet, with respect to the propriety of implicitly following the opinions of their constituents, he should be glad to know how many seats would have been resigned, on the question of the corn bill, if the principle of the right hon. baronet were pursued.—At that time fifty petitions were presented in one evening, against the proposed bill, which was, notwithstanding, carried into effect. This was not the proper time to discuss the merits of the income tax; but the period would arrive, when the public would agree with him, that it was the best measure that could be devised.

Mr. *Stuart Wortley* strongly condemned any departure from the old and excellent custom of raising the supplies for the current year, within the year; which could better be effected by direct taxation, than by loan. With respect to the observation of the right hon. baronet, that those who differed from the opinions of their constituents ought to vacate their seats, he never could agree to such a principle—the admission of which must immediately destroy the independence of the House. What; were they only to be independent of the Crown? Were they not sent to that House to use their deliberate judgment, and to vote according to the dictates of their conscience? When they thus acted, as appeared to them, for the benefit of the country, the public, their neighbours, and those who were watching their conduct in that House, must see it. But, because there was a strong popular feeling on a particular subject, were they, if they voted in opposition to that feeling, immediately afterwards to give up their seats? If they did so, they would be changed into mere delegates. They would no longer be a body assembled together for the good of the empire at large; but they would be obliged to obey the opinion of a certain number of individuals in the country. Whether he came from a place, in which there was a small or a great number of constituents (and he was free to confess his constituents were not very numerous), did not, in his opinion, alter the position. If he did his duty, honestly and to the best of his judgment, he would be ready to meet a large or a small body of constituents, and to justify his conduct.

Sir *John Newport* said, his observation did not apply to those who differed from the opinion of the community at large, but to those who held sentiments different from the great body of their constituents.

Lord *Milton* said, that, in a great deal of what had fallen from his hon. friend (Mr. Stuart Wortley) he entirely concurred; but he did not state the circumstance to which the result of the debate of the other evening was to be attributed. If gentlemen looked merely to their own constituents and acted according to their opinions, then, indeed, they became merely delegates. But the constitutional principle was this—that the House of Commons at large were to act with the people at large. That doctrine he would maintain, as well as the doctrine laid down by his hon. friend. If the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Rose) felt restless on his seat, when he heard the opinion expressed by several hon. members, he (lord Milton) felt no less uneasy on his, when he heard the assertions of the right hon. gentleman. There was no alliance which courtiers and the dependents of the Crown were more ready to make, than an alliance with the mob. They knew that resistance to the Crown was to be looked for from the landed interest of the country, and the only allies whom they could call in, to maintain them in their servility, were the mob (Hear, hear!). They knew this well; and the right hon. gentleman's speech that night was only similar to what had been uttered on former occasions, and was a pretty good sample of the line that had been pursued by persons of his description, in the present day, and in preceding times. He utterly denied the right hon. gentleman's statement. He said, that the poor did not feel the property tax. Was a man who received four or five pounds a year, as a mark of approbation from his deceased master, was he a rich man? and did he not pay to the property tax? [Cries of No!] He affirmed that it was so [No, no, from lord Castlereagh]. The noble lord was certainly wrong. If a man had a mere annuity left him, even in that case he paid the tax; and of this he was quite sure, that if he had stock in the funds, producing four or five pounds a year, he undoubtedly contributed his portion. Was he a rich man? Did the hon. member for Christ-church call him wealthy? He could not do it. And yet, with this fact before him, he told the House, that the income tax fell only on the rich. He called on the right hon. gentleman, instead of dealing out rumours, to deal in argument. He had accused an hon. gentleman of not adducing any argument—but what he (lord Milton) now stated was sufficient to prove that the observation of the hon. member for Wiltshire was founded in fact. The poor man who contributed to the tax suffered much more than the rich one. It bore a great deal harder on such a person, when he was deprived of one-tenth of his trifling income, than it did on the right hon. gentleman with his thousands. His proportion came out of his luxuries. He might have a horse, a carriage, or a servant less, but he had as good a dinner every day as usual. But did the poor man, when he gave up one-tenth of his income, continue to have so good a dinner as he had been previously in the habit of sitting down to? The tax, he knew, fell in the same proportion on the higher and lower orders, but it bore more heavily on the latter, because their property was too small to admit of such a reduction, without giving up some comfort or necessary of life. Away, then, with all those assertions and rumours, which, pursuing the example the right hon. gentleman had set, at former times, he now wished to scatter amongst the people. Rumours that could be set afloat for no other purpose, but to attract the attention, and solicit the support of the mob.

Mr. *Rose* believed the noble lord was completely mistaken with respect to the operation of the property tax. He had a recollection, that, as it existed in 1806, all such persons as those mentioned by the noble lord were exempted. Whether the noble lord's friends, who raised the amount of the tax, had removed those exemptions, he would not so confidently state; nor was it necessary, in his view of the question, that he should. The noble lord talked of his appealing to the mob. He had as great a contempt for such a proceeding as the noble lord. He had stood up, at different times, to support the interest of various classes of the people, but it was always in an open and straight forward way.

Mr. *Sharp* said, he would not have spoken on the present occasion, but for the extraordinary reason assigned by the chancellor of the exchequer for giving up the war malt tax. The right hon. gentleman observed, that having been deprived of five or six millions, in consequence of the failure of the property tax, it was of little importance whether he came forward to negociate a loan for six or for eight millions. In this he showed as much ignorance of the state of the money market, as he had done when he preferred introducing the property tax to raising a moderate loan, for fear he should occasion a depression of the funds. If he had recourse to the system of borrowing very extensively, instead of looking to certain sources of taxation, he would find himself greatly mistaken in the success of his speculation. But this was merely a pretext for abandoning the tax. It appeared to him more likely that it was laid aside because ministers saw that the House were determined to make them spend less; and that was the way alone in which the prayers of the petitioners throughout the country could be fairly complied with. The real state of the case, he believed, was, that the present government would submit to any thing sooner than allow the administration of affairs to be taken out of their hands.

Mr. *Thompson* said, the reason he voted against the tax was, because it was extremely oppressive on the lower orders of society. His conviction on this point did not rest on hearsay, but was the result of an examination of the papers laid on the table. The last paper was an account of the property tax paid by persons in trades and professions. In that account, the first class of persons were those whose incomes were above 50*l.* and under 100*l.*; and it appeared that the sum paid by them constituted more than one-eighth of the amount of the whole tax. Could any person say, that this did not fall upon those who were ill able to pay it? It fell on the industrious classes in the country—on those who, from being journeymen, had, by their exertions, attained the situation of small masters. The next class consisted of persons whose incomes were upwards of 100*l.* and below 150*l.* Now, putting the two classes together, he found that they paid very nearly one quarter of the whole tax under schedule D. The hon. gentleman then repelled the insinuation which had been thrown out, that the House had removed the tax, merely for the purpose of serving themselves. For his part, he could justly affirm, and he believed hundreds of members around him could do the same, that in voting against the measure, he wished to give relief to the people, without considering what benefit might result to himself. He thought the noble lord had acted improperly when he expressed himself in such a manner, and had thus given an opportunity to designing men to put a wrong construction on the conduct of those who opposed the tax; by such persons it would probably be represented, that there was a combination of the rich, to burthen and oppress the poor. He congratulated the House on the vote of Monday night; one benefit had already resulted from it, the abandonment of the war malt tax. But it was not to be supposed, in consequence of this, that ministers did not know where to stop in conceding, and that the people did not know where to cease in demanding. There was, he could assure the House, more sense amongst the people, than some gentlemen seemed to imagine. They would be thankful for what they had received, and they would show their gratitude by their readiness in paying the taxes which must necessarily be suffered to remain; provided there was manifested, what they had a right to expect, an evident desire to promote economy in every department of the state. He did not think that his majesty's ministers were sufficiently apprised of the distress under which the country laboured; and he should like to lead the noble lord and the other members of the administration, if they would follow him, into the fens of Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire, where they would learn a lesson which never could be forgotten. He would then introduce them to the small farmers in Yorkshire, who were impoverished beyond description; and, if they afterwards chose to take a trip to Ireland, he would have no objection to wish them a pleasant journey. They would there see as much distress as was to be met with in any part of England.

Mr. *Forbes* said, as the noble lord had imputed unfair motives to those who had voted against the property tax on Monday last, it was impossible for him to refrain from making a few observations—

Lord *Castlereagh* spoke to order. The hon. gentleman had attributed words to him which he had not used. He did not state that gentlemen were actuated by improper motives. All he observed was, that the tax fell heavier on the higher than the lower orders of the people. So far from imputing undue motives to those who opposed the tax, he had declared his belief, that they were not swayed by any considerations but those of the most liberal nature.

Mr. *Forbes* submitted to the consideration of the House, whether he was not warranted in what he had said? (Cries of order!).

The *Speaker*. If an hon. member has any improper conduct imputed to him, and denies it, the business cannot be carried farther.

Lord *Castlereagh*. I hope it will be recollected, that, besides denying the statement, I referred to facts to prove that I was correct.

Mr. *Forbes* then proceeded to state his opinion, as to the cause which induced ministers to abandon the war malt tax. This, he conceived, had been done, in some degree, with a view to recover that popularity which they had very justly acquired, and which they had since very foolishly thrown away, by attempting to force on the people a measure in the highest degree obnoxious. As to the motives by which the majority of Monday night last were swayed, he considered them to be founded on impartiality and justice. The public would go over the list of the majority and the minority, name by name, and they would, at once, perceive the true motives by which members on each side of the question were actuated in giving their votes. They would, on that, as on every other occasion, do justice to that honourable House for standing up, as it had done, to maintain the rights, and support the petitions of the people.

Lord *Compton* could not congratulate the House, as some gentlemen had done, on the vote of Monday night. Had the property tax been carried, as he hoped it would have been, he would then have expected to see other taxes reduced. But now he could not help expressing his astonishment at the conduct of his majesty's ministers, in proposing to abandon the war malt tax. He was surprised, after ministers had stated the absolute necessity of the property tax, for the purpose of keeping up public credit, and of raising a large portion of the supply within the year, that they should now come down, and state their intention of removing another very important tax. He never felt more disappointment in his life than on the present occasion, when he found ministers pursuing a couse which seemed to him like asking for popularity.

Sir *W. W. Wynn* said, that so far from being surprised, as the noble lord appeared to be, at the conduct of ministers, in giving up the war malt tax, he should wonder very much indeed, if they did not also abandon the agricultural horse tax, which was most injurious and oppressive.

AGRICULTURAL DISTRESS.] Mr. *Curwen* presented a petition from the land-holders, yeomen, and farmers in the county of Cumberland, praying for relief, in the present distressed state of the agricultural interest. The petition having been read, the hon. gentleman proceeded to observe, that he felt some regret at the delay of another week, which it appeared was to take place before the distressed state of the agricultural interest would be taken into consideration. He hoped, however, that due weight would be given to the petitions on this subject, and expressed his conviction, that there was not a landlord in the country, unless amongst those that were immediately connected with government, who did not wish to join the petitioners in this instance. The noble lord could not be intimately acquainted with the distresses of the agricultural interest. If he were, he was sure he never would have used the language attributed to him; namely, that the country was in a most flourishing situation. The petition which he now presented was not signed by persons hostile to the noble lord. The petitioners had supported him and the government to which he belonged, but their necessities now compelled them to speak. In the course of two days, the petition was signed by 500 persons; and, had sufficient notice been given, he believed every gentleman and every farmer in Cumberland would have affixed his name to it. The distress was so excessive, that, if speedy relief were not granted, hundreds of farms would be entirely abandoned. The hon. gentleman then contended, that the distress did not arise, as had been stated, from a surplus produce. During a period of thirty years, there had been no surplus produce, except in the year 1792, when there was an overplus of 30,000 quarters. The distress originated from the immense extent of importation, joined to the deficiency of crops, at different times. In consequence of this, the prices fell; and they had, in consequence of pecuniary distress, continued to fall ever since. The hon. gentleman then shortly argued, that the income tax fell more severely upon the poor than on the rich, inasmuch as the land-owner and farmer were prevented, by its pressure, from employing servants and labourers. The property of the wealthy was the riches of the poor, and it was the pressure of taxation on the former that bore oppressively on the lower classes. He was glad to hear that the war malt tax was to be given up; but there were other taxes, amongst them that on husbandry horses, which ought also to be remitted. On a farm of 70*l.* a year, the income tax was only 7*s.*; but if the farmer kept a horse he was charged 2*l.* 17*s.* per annum for it, and 7*s.* for a groom, making a gross sum of 3*l.* 4*s.* In making his return also, the farmer was obliged to swear, that neither he nor any of his family had used any horse for riding, if he wished to escape the tax. Now, he would put it to the House, how very difficult it was for any man to make such an affidavit. In the last year, there were 97 appeals against the charge, in the county where he resided, of which 94 were allowed. This, surely, was such a temptation to the crime of perjury, as ought not to be permitted for an hour.

Mr. *Long Wellesley* said, that the property tax being abandoned, and the war malt duty given up, he could not conceive what more gentlemen could wish for. These were the two great burthens which pressed on the agricultural interest, and their removal would be productive of the best effects. As to the motives which had induced ministers to abandon the latter, he did not think there was any necessity to examine them. In a public point of view they were of no importance. He would not say, as some gentlemen had, that they were courting popularity; but he felt that they deserved it; and no man was more ready to applaud them than he was, because they had attended to the voice of parliament.

Mr. *Marryat* deprecated the idea, that, by doing away the property tax it was intended to relieve the rich at the expense of the poor. He argued that the reverse was the fact, and exemplified his position by adverting to his own situation. He, like every other gentleman who had a country residence, employed himself in improving it, as far as his circumstances would admit. Now, if the tax-gatherer called on him for 10*l.* per cent. on his income, he must have it; but, if he made no such demand, that money would be laid out in the village, where he resided, with those who employed servants, or it would be expended in supporting labourers whom he himself hired, by which means the industry of the people was encouraged. As to voting from interested motives, he should at once do away that supposition, by stating, that he should pay just as much, at present, as if the tax were continued for two years. For the last eighteen months, mercantile men had made no profits. They had, in fact, encountered severe losses. The same depression of price which the farmers complained of, affected the manufactures of the country, of which the merchants were the great holders. Now, he had been called on to pay the same property tax which he had been charged, during the three former years. He postponed paying the money into the bank, until he knew the result of the proposition for renewing the tax. If it had been carried, he would have returned *nil*, as he had made no profit; but now, as the measure was defeated, sooner than submit the inspection of his most private affairs to the inquisitorial powers of the commissioner, he would give up a large sum of money, not one iota of which could legally have been demanded of him. He would now pay 10 per cent. into the bank on profits he had never received, which would amount to as much as 5 per cent. for two years, had the tax been continued. He had, therefore, gained nothing by the abandonment of the tax; and, he believed, the great body of merchants in the city of London stood in the same situation with himself.

Sir *James Graham* said, if the noble lord had known the situation of the country, he never would have pressed a tax which the people were unable to pay. He would have felt for their necessities, and given it up. The noble lord had said, that the tax fell more heavily on the rich than on the poor. If he knew any thing of political economy, he would not have made such a statement. The pressure on the rich man prevented him from employing the poor, who were thus abandoned to want and misery. If the noble lord visited his (sir James's) parish, he might there see 200 able-bodied men—sound wind and limb—soliciting to be employed as extra-watchmen, or in any other way whatever. Those who voted against the tax, scorned the idea of shifting a burthen from their own shoulders to those of others. He acted from conscientious motives. He felt himself reluctantly called on to vote against persons whom he considered as the saviours of the country. Government could not relieve the people from all taxation, but he was glad they had remitted the malt tax, which would have a beneficial effect on the morals of the people, by bringing them back to the consumption of a wholesome beverage, instead of frequenting gin-shops, as they did at present.

Mr. *Western* hoped it would not be supposed, in consequence of the abandonment of the malt tax, and of his postponement of the notice relative to the state of agriculture, that he intended to withdraw his motion altogether.

Lord *Castlereagh* said, that he should turn his mind, as much as possible, to the proposition of the hon. member, for the purpose of using his best efforts to procure the necessary relief.

The petition was then ordered to be referred to the committee on the distressed state of the agriculture of the kingdom.

ESTABLISHMENTS OF THE ADMIRALTY.] Lord *Nugent* rose to move for certain papers relative to the salaries of clerks in the admiralty. The noble lord said, he had heard that considerable abuses had taken place in increasing the salaries of those persons. It had been represented to him, that several senior clerks had been removed on large pensions, and that junior clerks had been promoted at a very large increase of salary, in opposition to the expectations which the country had entertained of the economy of ministers, and in direct violation of a bill which had been introduced into that House by an hon. member who was not then present. This subject was more worthy of consideration, after the solemn pledge of economy which had been given by the Crown. If the noble lord and his colleagues were really desirous of relieving the distresses of the country, he thought they would readily acquiesce in this motion. He then moved, "That there be laid before this House, an account of the number of the clerks of the admiralty, and the rate of their salaries, for the years ending 1815 and 1816; and also the number of persons borne upon the establishment of the admiralty who have been removed, or have retired from the service, since the 31st of December 1814; specifying the amount of compensation granted to each individual, and the period of their respective services, or the grounds on which such compensation has been granted to them."

Mr. *Croker* said, that all the papers were already before the House. The noble lord would find, in the estimates proposed, the number of clerks of the admiralty intended to be kept this year, and those who had retired, with the amount of their compensations. He would find the same statement for the previous year, on looking at the estimates of that year. If the noble lord chose that the clerk should take the trouble of making the return, he certainly should have no objection to its being done. He had stated thus much in order that the country should not be misled, and should not think there was an increase, when there really was a diminution.

Lord *Nugent* expressed his intention of persisting in the motion, because the papers now before the House would not afford him an opportunity of comparing the expenses of 1814 with those of 1815, which he was anxious to do.

Sir *Francis Burdett* did not think that the clerks in the admiralty who executed their duties were overpaid; and he thought it would be a very poor economy to grudge them a sufficient remuneration for their services. He then alluded to the situation of the midshipmen. He had understood from the statement of an hon. member, on a former night, that midshipmen who had served six years had been promoted; he had since found that that was not always the case. He thought such individuals entitled to some remuneration, as well as those who had not quite finished their six years service.

Sir *George Warrender* assured the hon. baronet that he had been misinformed. All midshipmen who had served six years had been provided for. That was not of course the case with those who had not been the same length of time in the service.

Mr. *Bennet* wished to know, whether the order in council of the 30th January 1816, and the secretary of the admiralty's own letters, were on the table of the House.

Mr. *Croker* stated, that the order in council was, but not his letters, as they had not been moved for, but he should have no objection to produce them.

Mr. *Bennet* expressed his intention of moving for their production.

Mr. *Forbes* said, that notwithstanding what had fallen from the hon. baronet, he knew some individuals who had served in the navy seven years without being promoted.

Sir *G. Warrender* had been misunderstood if it was thought he had said that all midshipmen who had served six years had been promoted; that would have been impossible. Those who had eight years' service had met with promotion, but those who had only six had been provided for by employment being given them when they desired it.

Mr. *Bennet* asked in what manner they had been employed?

Sir *C. Hope* replied, that the midshipmen who had served six years had been provided for by being appointed to ships in commission; those who had eight years' service had been made lieutenants.

The motion was agreed to.

Lord Milton moved, for the appointment of Master George as secretary to the province of Nova Scotia, specifying his age, and the date of his appointment.

Mr. *Brougham* suggested, that the name of the school at which the young gentleman was educated should be added to the return—[A laugh].

The motion was agreed to.

SALARIES OF THE SECRETARIES OF THE ADMIRALTY.] Mr. *Methuen* rose, pursuant to a notice which he had given, to bring under the notice of the House, the order in council by which the salaries of the secretaries to the admiralty were to be regulated in time of peace. He said it was a subject as important as had ever come under the attention of parliament; but at the same time he could assure the noble lord he had no wish to condemn the government unheard. There were positive facts, however, which justified him in complaining of the evil, and the *onus probandi* would devolve upon the ministers, to show that no breach had been made in the promise from the Crown, that economy should be attended to, by proving the absolute necessity of the case in question. He brought the matter forward, perfectly uninfluenced by any thing like party feeling. It could not, indeed, be supposed, that he was one who would lightly cavil at the proceedings of government, when he had been among the foremost to support their measures, so long as he thought they deserved support; but he would never afford that support, when he saw that the proceedings of ministers were calculated to promote neither the glory nor the prosperity of the country.—He should first of all beg leave to read some extracts from papers which had been laid upon the table of that House, to prove the little attention which was really paid to economy and retrenchment. It appeared from those documents that in the excise office, for example, the salaries of two of the chairmen of that office had been raised from 1700*l.* to 2000*l.* a year each; and the salaries of four commissioners, from 1200*l.* to 1400*l.* annually. In the board of customs a similar increase had taken place, the salaries of the chairman being augmented from 1200*l.* to 1500*l.* per annum, and those of the commissioners from 800*l.* to 1000*l.* Such were some of the proofs of the disposition on the part of government to redeem that pledge of economy, which had been put into the speech of the Prince Regent at the opening of parliament. He now came to the most important of those documents, he meant the copy of the order in council, relating to the salaries in war and peace of the secretaries to the admiralty. That order was dated the 21st of June 1815, and set forth that "Whereas his majesty was graciously pleased, by his order in council of the 15th of January 1800, to direct, that a difference should be made in the salaries of our secretaries and clerks in times of war and of peace, namely, an increase in time of war of one-fourth in the salaries of the secretaries, and one-fifth in those of their clerks. And whereas, this distinction does not exist in any other department of government, not even in those dependent on this office, nor in those whose duties may be considered as most analagous: and whereas, we not only can see no sufficient reason for continuing this principle to this office, as a solitary instance, but entirely agree with the commissioners of naval revision, in the principle laid down in their report of the 13th of June 1805, and which his majesty was pleased to sanction by his order in council of the 28th of October 1807,—'That 'it is unjust that persons whose whole 'time, either in war or peace, is required 'to be devoted to the public service, and 'who consequently cannot, even in peace, 'apply to any other occupation, should 'suffer a material diminution of their in'comes when the war ceases:' We do therefore most humbly submit, that your royal highness may be graciously pleased, in the name and on the behalf of the King, to direct that the salaries established as war salaries by the said order in council, and by order in council of the 28th of October 1807, should be the permanent salaries, both in war and peace, of the several persons therein named." With respect to the regulation complained of being a solitary instance, continued the hon. member, there was a very easy way of removing that complaint, by extending the same system to all the other departments of the government. Looking, however, at the question itself as one of economy, he would ask his majesty's ministers whether there was ever such a moment chosen for augmenting the expenses of the country, in the wildest infatuation of ministerial indiscretion? Instead of increasing salaries, they ought to be reduced, not only on account of the unexampled difficulties in which we were placed, but on account of the diminution in price of all the articles of life. He really did not believe that a similar instance could be found in the official details of any government. With respect to the gentlemen who held the different situations in the excise and customs, he wished to be understood as imputing no blame or censure to them; and he trusted that nothing which he had said would draw upon them any invidious accusations. He had precisely the same feeling with respect to the secretaries of the admiralty. He took up the question entirely upon public grounds. Why did the government increase the salaries? Had the duties of the different offices been increased? Certainly not. If, however, the government were permitted to do those things without check or control, the duty of that House, in watching over the expenditure of the public money, would degenerate into mere form. He called upon every member who heard him, and who was anxious for the prosperity of the country, and who knew its distresses, to prove by their vote that night, that the resources of the nation were not to be squandered away by the improvident prodigality of ministers. They might be again, perhaps, reproached with exciting clamour, because they kept a strict watch over the conduct of government. If it was clamour, he was willing to take his share of the reproach; to such clamour, however, we owed the possession of that liberty we still enjoyed, and he would remind the people of England, that it was to such clamour that they were not now harnessed with the property tax—[Hear, hear!]. The hon. member then concluded, with moving, "that this House does approve of the order in council of the 15th of January, 1800, fixing the salaries of the secretaries of the admiralty at a lower rate in time of peace than in time of war, and does consider the departure from this order, in the order of council of the 21st of June 1815, by which an increase of salary is conferred on the secretaries, as highly unwarrantable." The second motion was for a copy of the correspondence between the commissioners of revenue and the treasury board, on the subject of an increase of salary since the 5th of January, 1815.

Lord *Castlereagh* denied that he had ever denominated as clamour the fair and legitimate discussions in that House. But he still contended, that there was a disposition in the honourable gentlemen opposite to clamour down the government by assuming that there was no disposition on the part of government to fulfil its pledge before any means were allowed by which, in fact, ministers could make known their intentions. It was that species of conduct of which he complained, and which he considered to be nothing better than mere clamour. With respect to the present question, he was perfectly ready to concur with the hon. gentleman, that it was one of great importance, as tending to put at issue the general principles of economy by which the government had regulated its proceedings; and though the particular sum involved in the motion of the hon. member, was not of much importance, yet it did, in fact, derive a degree of importance as illustrating those general principles. He hoped, however, that the members of that House, while they were discharging what they considered their duty to their constituents, by endeavouring to compel the government to adopt measures of economy, would not, at the same time, refuse to government a fair opportunity of explaining their measures to parliament, by which alone it could be determined whether ministers were disposed to practise a due economy, or to indulge in a lavish waste of the public money. There were, in fact, many retrenchments which had already been carried into effect, and many more which were in progress; and as a proof of the anxious disposition of government to practise seriously that economy which had been recommended, and which was so essential, he would submit a rough statement of some of the reductions which had already taken place. In a few days he hoped to be able to lay before parliament different documents, which would satisfactorily show the nature and extent, not only of what had been done, but of what was in progress, and what was in contemplation; meanwhile he should state such reduction as had taken place in those departments with which he was acquainted.

In the office of the secretary of state for the war department, seven clerks, one writer, one interpreter, and one under secretary had been reduced, making a saving of between 3 and 4,000*l.* per annum: in the war office considerable reductions were made in 1814, and further reductions would be made as soon as the weighty accounts of that office were made up; but he was sure the honourable gentlemen opposite would consider it as a very false economy to leave the military accounts unaudited. There were 18 departments in all that would be effected by the present reduction, but at present he should enumerate only the most important [On a question put by Mr. Tierney, as to the amount of the saving in the war-office, his lordship replied, that he was only now making a rough statement, and could not answer with accuracy]. In the paymaster-general's office there would be saved in the establishment abroad 31,000*l.* per annum; fourteen clerks would be reduced at home, whose salaries amount to 1,170*l.*; and other establishments would be reduced abroad, amounting to 7,900*l.* The whole saving would be 41,000*l.* in this department. In the commissariat department, eleven officers and eleven clerks would be reduced, which, with other savings, would amount to 14,000*l.* at home; 159 officers and 629 clerks would be reduced abroad, which would effect an aggregate saving of 100,000*l.* In the store-keeper-general's office, there was a reduction of 6,894*l.* and there would be a further reduction of 3,400*l.* as soon as the arrears were settled: the total saving would not be less than 10,000*l.* The barrack department would be reduced from a scale of 90,000 men to 40,000, and 88 officers would be discontinued, whose salaries amounted to 7,190*l.* The reason why barracks were larger than might be required for the real number of men to occupy them, was because many of them were substantial buildings, which it would be no economy to pull down, or to suffer to fall into decay. In the admiralty there would be a reduction of 24 clerks and nine messengers, by which 5,000*l.* would be saved, and 2,000*l.* more on the death and falling in of the salaries of certain retired servants. In the navy department several establishments would be wholly discontinued, 5,100 persons discharged, and a saving effected in all of 402,000*l.* There was a reduction in the victualling office, by which a saving of 25,000*l.* was effected, and there would be a further saving to the same amount in the wages of artificers and men now employed. The transport office would be entirely discontinued, leaving to the navy board and admiralty the duty that might arise in time of peace. No returns had yet been made from the ordnance office; but he only wished to show that ministers had really been occupied in the retrenchments they had proposed; the total amounted to 571,000*l.* to which 81,000*l.* more would shortly be added, making a total of 650,000*l.*—He had only said thus much to satisfy the hon. member who made the motion, that economy had not been neglected; and he trusted he had succeeded in satisfying him, and the House also, that his majesty's ministers had not been merely employed in creating offices and augmenting salaries.

He should now come to the particular question before the House, and give such explanations as the House had a right to demand. With respect to making the additions to these salaries, he should state the circumstances under which the commissioners had given their report; and he had no objection to produce the correspondence, because he did not suppose that the hon. gentleman meant to take the sense of the House, but merely to gain information on the question. That question did not take its origin in the present day, but as far back as 1806, when the gentlemen on the other side were in administration. There was then a representation to the treasury, that from the great accumulation of business these parties were entitled to an increase of salary. The treasury did not comply; but on application being again made in Mr. Perceval's administration, and the increase of business being urged, he did hold out that the claim should be satisfied as soon as the restoration of peace permitted it. The House should consider the nature of the duties in which these parties were employed; they collected a revenue of 40 millions for the public, and of that 21 millions had been added since any augmentation of their salaries had taken place. He did not, however, press on the House merely the length of time that had elapsed since the last augmentation, or the vast increase of labour that had been added; but he must observe, that there was no better economy than to stimulate the exertions of officers so usefully employed for the public. The services of that department were most meritorious in the eyes of the treasury; but it was not merely thus—it was not merely that an increase of labour and responsibility had been added—but the treasury had also made an arrangement which transferred to another quarter much of the patronage which had formerly been enjoyed by these officers; it was on these grounds, therefore, taken altogether, that the increase of salary had been proposed. The noble lord hoped that the country would never become so poor as to be prevented from stimulating the exertions of meritorious servants of the public by adequate reward. When it was considered how important were the offices filled by those whose salaries were in question, and how conducive it was to the interests of the nation that they should perform their duties well; when it was considered that their labours had of late been so much raised, and that forty millions of the public money now passed through their hands and was under their control, it would not be thought that 7,500*l.* divided among the whole was an exorbitant increase of pay. The sum was given, too, it was to be considered, after due deliberation, after expectations repeatedly held out, and after various representations had been made to different administrations. With regard to the question of prices, and the necessity of reduction rather than increase from the fall of the articles of living, he did not think it necessary to say much. It must be allowed that provisions had fallen in price, such as bread and meat; but in other respects there had been no great reduction. Upon the general average of those articles on which an income like that of the persons in question was expended, it would be found that there was no great fall of prices; or, that, consistently with the same degree of comforts, any extent of expenditure could be spared. Upon these grounds the treasury acted in recommending a rise of salary; and he hoped that the House would not allow a fall in the price of a few articles of living, which might be only temporary, to be pleaded in bar of an arrangement made on considerations of an increase of duty, and so long contemplated by the officers interested.

Having said thus much with respect to the officers of the excise and customs, and the other topics embraced by the hon. gentleman's speech, he would proceed to give his reasons for moving the previous question on the resolution with regard to the pay of the secretaries of the admiralty, with which the hon. gentleman had concluded. But he would first request the clerk to read over the resolution [It was accordingly read]. The noble lord, resuming the discussion, contended, that the resolution proceeded upon a partial and mixed view of the question. It had stated, with approbation, the principle laid down in 1800, and censured the departure from it which had taken place last summer; but it applied that principle only to one office, while its operation, if carried into complete effect, would extend over several; and approved of the principle of making a difference between the peace and war salaries of the offices connected with the admiralty, in the terms of the recommendation that at first established it; but, in coming to the application of that principle, it mentioned only the salaries of the secretaries. There were two questions that suggested themselves with regard to the subject under consideration: namely, whether the principle of the order in council of 1800 was so wise and just that it should not be departed from? or whether, supposing it set aside, the salaries of the secretaries was too high on the grounds of economy and expediency. If the principle of 1800 were alone to be regarded, without any fresh examination of its merits as applied to existing circumstances, then the clerks should have been included in the resolution of the honourable gentleman as well the secretaries, as the original regulation equally comprehended both. If, on the other hand, it was to be made a question, standing on its own grounds, whether it was proper to reduce the salaries of the secretaries as distinct from that of the clerks, then a proper opportunity would occur for its discussion when the business came regularly before parliament. It would be recollected, that when the pay of a certain officer was alleged to be too great, the consideration of it was postponed till the army estimates, in which it was included, came before the House, and that a resolution was then moved that it should be reduced by a certain specific amount. The noble lord advised the same course to be pursued on the present occasion, and deprecated discussion till the proper season for deliberation arrived. The honourable gentleman took a different course. He required the sanction of the House to the principle laid down in 1800, in contradistinction to that acted upon in 1815. He would again repeat, that this principle included the clerks as well as the secretaries; and that the resolution now moved would therefore, if adopted, actually go the length of modifying a measure which it professed unqualifiedly to recommend. The hon. gentleman was in error when he proceeded on the supposition that the principle of 1800 was never interfered with till the present instance occurred. The truth was, that the principle of establishing a difference between war and peace salaries had extended at first more generally to officers connected with the navy, and had been restricted in its operation in 1807.

The noble lord said, that the House would now expect some explanation from him of the reasons which had induced the board of admiralty to recommend to the treasury that rise of salary for which an order in council had subsequently been obtained; and he owed it to his hon. friend, the secretary of the admiralty (Mr. Croker), whose name and character had been implicated, to enter fairly into such an explanation. He was authorized by the noble lord at the head of that board in stating that the hon. secretary exerted no influence, nor made any suggestion, of a wish to obtain an increase of salary, and that the subject was brought under the review of government by circumstances over which he exerted no control. The hon. secretary foresaw that any interference might be made a personal charge against him, and therefore kept aloof from all interference or solicitation. The subject was maturely considered and deliberated upon by the board of admiralty, by the first lord of the treasury, and his right hon. friend the chancellor of the exchequer, before the order in council was recommended; but in all these consultations the hon. secretary took no share.

He neither solicited an advance of salary, nor would he have felt any mortification at a reduction, if such a reduction had been considered wise and politic. The question with regard to him arose during the consideration of the interests of others whom the principle of 1800 affected. It would be recollected, that the regulation fixing the reduction of the salaries of the secretaries at one-fourth in time of peace struck off from the salaries of the clerks the proportion of one fifth. When, therefore, the peace was concluded with America, in March last, the period of reduction was conceived to have arrived; and as the war with France, though then it had not commenced, soon afterwards occurred, it naturally became a subject of deliberation how the officers who came under the regulation of 1800 should be paid. There was no interval of real peace, because the ratification of the treaty with America, and the re-appearance of Buonaparté in France, were almost simultaneous; but there was an absence of declared war with vigorous preparations for actual hostilities. How, then, were these officers to be remunerated? Was one-fifth to be deducted from their income upon the principle of reduced labour, while there was no diminution of labour; and were they to be placed in a worse situation than any other class of public servants? The government, taking the subject under consideration, came to an opinion, that it was better to recommend a continuance of the war salary in time of peace, by abandoning the principle of 1800, than to increase the peace salary to the extent rendered necessary, with an adherence to the principle of the two rates. This rise in peace, which would be permanent, and would render no rise in war necessary, seemed to them true economy. The only thing, then, to be considered was, whether the hon. secretary should not participate in the rise, or whether he was to be the only exception to the rule adopted? Upon this there could scarcely be a difference of opinion. He could take upon himself to say that there was not in the whole circle of government any office more important than that which was so ably filled by his hon. friend; not merely on account of the labour attached to it, but on account of the necessity that it should be in the hands of a gentleman of high honour and character, that the secrets on which the whole welfare of our navy depended might be safe in his hands. The scale adopted formerly in regulating the salary of this officer had been influenced rather by the difference of the amount of fees in war and peace, of which the emoluments formerly consisted, than on the duties to be performed. The establishment of the navy was also much increased since 1800. Our ordinary was greater, and our naval force in commission was greater than in any former peace. Not less than 100 sail of vessels connected with the revenue had been transferred to the department of the admiralty, which entailed an addition of much laborious business on the secretary. The great mass of business was such that it required to be followed up with assiduity; and the idea was not correct, that the secretary could be a gentleman at large at any time. As far as salary could countenance the idea, it was proper to let it be known, that this office was one of toil and labour in peace as well as in war. This increase of salary it was to be recollected had not been carried into effect now, but soon after the battle of Waterloo, when the war was not concluded, and, when if the oracles of the other side of the House were consulted, it would have been pronounced to have been far from its conclusion. The whole question would be open for discussion, when the estimates were before the House, which as the objection was not to the general principle, but a particular office, would be the proper time for deciding on it. The House might then fairly deliberate, whether an office not inferior in laboriousness to any in the state, not excepting those of the cabinet, would be overpaid by 4000*l.* a-year, and they would be relieved from all delicacy as to his hon. friend by what he had stated. Convinced, therefore, that this was not the proper time for discussion, although he by no means deprecated discussion when the proper time should arrive, he would move that, the House proceed to the other orders of the day.

Mr. *Martin*, said he had heard nothing in the noble lord's speech which had convinced him of the impropriety of the motion. The second secretary of the admiralty had never till this time been considered a permanent officer. If the two secretaries felt indisposed to the increase of their salaries, their refusal to receive it would be very acceptable to the country. The ministers, who were fond of praising Mr. Burke without any desire to imitate him might have found in his writings, on the subject of economy, some useful information. However desirable such an increase of salaries was at other times the, necessities of the country now outweighed every other consideration. The hon. member who had introduced the subject was entitled to the utmost praise for bringing the matter before the House.

Mr. *Warre* said, it was not a sufficient answer to the arguments of the hon. mover, to say that his motion did not include the clerks as well as the secretaries; but it should be shown how that which in 1800 was wise and good, and which was followed in 1802, was now departed from. He did not place much reliance on the opinion of the board of revision—a board which was essentially different from that of naval inquiry. The first-mentioned board appeared to have been appointed to undo the real reform which had been effected by the last. If the order in council of last year was referred to, it would be seen that the words were "Whereas since the ratification of the treaty of peace with the united states of America, the naval force of the country, and the consequent business of this department, has from political circumstances, not been considerably reduced below the war establishment." This might be applicable last June, but it was not applicable now [Hear, hear!]. With regard to the suggestion, that when the estimates were before the House, the question of the increase of salary might be best discussed, he remembered that the office of joint paymaster of the forces had been once brought into discussion when the army estimates were under consideration. What was the event? The ministers said, that it would be better to put off that discussion till the bill of an hon. member (Mr. Bankes) was brought in. The discussion was accordingly put off, and the office was included in the bill:—that bill passed the House, and the office still existed. He should agree to the motion, because he thought the increase of salary to the secretaries was a culpable attempt to expend the public money, and such a resolution was a better method of expressing the sense of the House, than merely to reduce the estimates. It was said, that there was an increase of duty at the admiralty on account of the hundred revenue cutters which had been transferred to that department; but if this justified an increase of salaries at the admiralty, did it not justify a diminution in the department from which the business had been taken away?

Mr. *Robinson* said, that whether the House adopted or rejected the principle that there should be a difference in salaries, in war and peace, it could not be argued that the ministers were culpable in acting on it. For if to act on this principle were culpable, the government was not only to blame with respect to the admiralty, but the navy and other departments. But if the principle was relinquished, and it was only said that the hon. secretary was paid beyond his exertions or services, he would by no means admit the justness of the assertion. He was himself acquainted with the duties of the admiralty board, and could declare from experience, that if 4000*l.* was too much in time of peace, it was too little in time of war. There was no office under the Crown that required more unremitting exertion, or that more completely absorbed all the faculties both of body and mind of the person who held it. Adverting to an observation which had been made, on the office of the joint paymasters of the army, he said, that though there were two paymasters, there was only one salary; and though he himself held two offices, he could only draw the emoluments of one.

Mr. *Vernon* said, he had felt it his duty to support the property tax, because it was an economical tax. Having supported that tax on the principle of economy, it became more imperative on him to support the application of the same principle in the reduction of all unnecessary expenditure. On this subject the country had a strong feeling, and it was of great importance that the House should unite the affections of the country, without which their strength would be weakness. It was unfair to contrast the great reduction which had been made with the small reduction which was now proposed. They might indeed regret that the reduction was so small, but it was not the less their duty to attend to the minutest items. It was to be recollected that the taxes did not meet our expenditure, and that loans must be raised to defray any increase of salaries. He therefore, at this time especially, deprecated the increase of the salaries of the gentlemen who were the subject of the motion. At least these gentlemen might give up a part of their emoluments. If it was admitted that the labour of twelve hours in the day were adequately paid by a salary of 4000*l.* a year, surely the labour of six hours in the day would be adequately paid by a salary of 3000*l.* a year.

Mr. *Brougham* observed, that every one who had heard the sensible and judicious observations of the hon. gentleman who had just sat down, must allow that he had recommended the adoption of the motion before them on the true grounds on which it ought to be adopted. He trusted that those grounds would receive the sanction of the House. It was exactly on matters such as these, which involved the principle of economy, and which were in reality of more importance, as the sum was trifling that the sentiments of parliament ought to be distinctly pronounced. He had been anxious to offer himself to the attention of the House, as soon as he heard the defence of the noble lord, in consequence of the share which he had recently taken in a discussion on the subject, on which occasion the noble lord desired the House to suspend their judgment, until he explained the transaction, or, to use the noble lord's own words, "until he had been heard in his defence." The noble lord's explanation had now been heard. The noble lord had been heard in the defence, not only of this particular measure, but of the general conduct of government with respect to matters of retrenchment, since the conclusion of the war; and he must in his conscience say that to a more lame and impotent defence he had never listened. Although the noble lord would probably give no credit to the assertion, he declared that he had attended to the noble lord's speech with the utmost anxiety for its success—not in defending the transaction, for that was impossible—but in explaining it away in a manner that might be satisfactory. He had entertained little doubt that he should hear from the noble lord to night, after the decision of that House on Monday last, that it had never been meant permanently to increase the salaries in question. But not so; no such explanation was given by the noble lord; and the House were told that it was necessary in time of peace to raise the salaries of those two public officers, in spite of the diminution of their labours, and in spite of the distresses of the times.

He would not follow the noble lord into the general question of the retrenchments which it seemed had lately occupied the attention of his majesty's government, because an early opportunity would occur for taking a more distinct view of their extent and value. But even at the present moment, when only a general estimate of those retrenchments had been exhibited by the noble lord, an estimate in which it would be too much to expect accuracy, new as his majesty's ministers were to the work, and unskilful artists as they must necessarily be upon it; still, in his humble opinion, even that general and inaccurate estimate called for one or two observations. In the first place, the noble lord had stated, generally, that in the department of the war secretary no less than seven officers had been dismissed, besides an under secretary. But why was not the office itself abolished? It had been created for war alone. When, on a former occasion, an hon. friend of his had moved for its abolition, he had been answered "What! would you abolish this office while we are at war, while the duties of it are so important and so numerous, while the contest rages from one extremity of the world to the other, while expeditions are preparing for the West Indies, for the Baltic, for Holland, in short, for all parts of the world, is that the time you would adopt for closing an office of utility so extensive?" It was on this ground that his hon. friend's motion was rejected. The inference was, that at the close of the war the office might be abolished without disadvantage; and he confessed that he had expected to hear, when the noble lord to night opened his budget of retrenchments he had, perhaps with an ignorant impatience, expected to hear, that the first article would be to cut off this office, root and branch; instead of which the country was to be put off with the reduction of seven officers and an under secretary.

There was another part of the noble lord's statement on which he wished to say a few words. The noble lord had talked very largely of the reduction, in the admiralty, of several clerks, and—which had a most splendid and cheering sound—4 or 5000 office bearers, whose salaries amounted to between 4 and 500,000*l*. This certainly looked like doing business. But it turned out that these 4 or 5000 office bearers were so many artificers, at the pay of a shilling a day — very respectable persons indeed, much more respectable than many individuals serving under government, who did much less work and received much more emolument—but still mere gangs of workmen employed in the dock-yards! Why, the war being at an end, those artificers must be discharged. Was it to be supposed that they were to go on making blocks, and forging anchors, and twisting ropes? Their discharge was indispensable; and yet it formed more than four parts in five of the noble lord's boasted and paraded retrenchments! The war being at an end, government with all their disposition to maintain large establishments, could find no shadow of excuse for retaining those men, and then they took great credit for discharging them! The charge which he made against the noble lord was —not merely as it had been said on a recent night, that with one hand he created new offices and increased the salaries of the old ones, while with the other he cut off the offices which the termination of the war had rendered unnecessary—but that with both hands, with might and main, the noble lord increased the number of new offices, and the salaries of the old; and that with neither hand he cut off any office for the continuance of which it was possible to advance any pretext, however trifling or absurd—[Hear, hear!]. Such was the amount of the credit which his majesty's ministers deserved for their operations in retrenchment. In the case to which he had just alluded, it appeared that 5000 out of the 5300 abolitions were produced by the dismissal of artificers, and that above 400,000*l.* of the 500,000*l.* saved to the country, arose from the cessation of their wages. What an attempt was this to deceive—if he might use the expression—to gull, to blind parliament and the country—[Hear, hear!].

There was still another topic that deserved to be noticed—the commissariat. The noble lord boasted, that 100 or 150 clerks had been cut off from this department. But was it possible that they could be retained? In the peninsula they were of great utility, but to talk of keeping them up now would be ridiculous. The result of the noble lord's magnificent statement, therefore, was, that two or three dozen offices had been abolished, which there was no shadow of a pretext for retaining, and 40 or 50,000*l.* a year saved, which there was no shadow of a pretext for paying. And this was what the public were to get as the ridemption on the part of his majesty's government of their pledge of economy and retrenchment [Hear, hear!].

He now came to the consideration of the question before the House, namely, the increase—for so it was—during a time of profound peace, of the salaries of two officers whose duties were urgent only during a time of active war. The noble lord had made many remarks on the mode in which this question had been brought forward. The answer was, that it was enough for the House to discuss one question at once. When they should have disposed of the question before them, as he hoped and believed they would dispose of it, there would be ample time to enter on the investigation of the other retrenchments that were necessary, and to argue and determine the principle on which those retrenchments should proceed. At present no man could doubt the nature of the question before them. It was simply this—whether Mr. Croker (he had a right, although the hon. gentleman was a member of that House, to name him when he spoke of him in his official and not in his legislative capacity) and Mr. Barrow, the two secretaries of the admiralty, should have an increase of salary, the one of 1,000*l.* in addition to 3,000*l.* the other of 500*l.* in addition to 1,500*l.*? And this too at a time when every article of life was diminished in price 30 or 40 per cent., when compared with its price two or three years ago. The right hon. the chancellor of the exchequer shook his head at this. It was true the right hon. gentleman had argued that this depreciation would not be permanent. But why raise the salaries of these gentlemen while it continued [Hear, hear!]? The argument of the right hon. gentleman was, that although it was true that the prices of the articles of life were less than when sir Evan Nepean was secretary, and that Mr. Croker could therefore live more cheaply than sir Evan Nepean, yet that, for aught the House knew, this depreciation was temporary, and that three or four years hence things might be in a very different situation. His first answer was, that it was true they might be so, and then Mr. Croker would be in the same situation as that in which sir Evan Nepean had been. Why should he be in a better? The character, the abilities, and the industry of sir Evan Nepean were well known. They had been proved by those dispatches, evincing transcendent talents, which he had written, and by that indefatigable labour which he had undergone in the early period of the late war, when it raged in every part of the world. His duties had indeed absorbed the faculties of his body and mind. He had scarcely enjoyed the blessings of rest, sleeping only three or four hours out of the twenty-four, and hardly ever breathing any atmosphere but that of his office. And for all this sir Evan Nepean enjoyed only that 4,000*l.* a year to which it was proposed to raise Mr. Croker's salary in time of peace. His next answer to the right hon. gentleman was, why raise Mr. Croker's salary, until the rise in the articles of necessary consumption? Let him wait until, contrary to every expectation at the present moment, the price of those articles should return to what it was three or four years ago. The only object of the proposition was to put so much money into Mr. Croker's pocket, at the public expense. It was a most profligate and scandalous waste of the public money. It was a most profligate and scandalous job [Hear, hear!]. It was a job of which every man in the country who paid taxes had a right to cry out to parliament for the punishment, or, at least, for the censure [Hear, hear!]. In this declaration he desired to be understood, as not intending the slightest disrespect to the two gentlemen—he did not mean the noble lord and the right hon. gentleman, for they were the advisers and the accomplices in the transaction [A laugh]; but he disclaimed casting any imputation on Mr. Croker and Mr. Barrow. The noble lord had exculpated the one, by declaring, that so far was he from having procured this job, that he had manifested the utmost repugnance to it. He confessed that he thought it would have been much to the hon. gentleman's honour had he gone a step further—had he completely refused to accept the proffered advantage [Hear, hear!]. No force, even of his majesty's government, could have compelled the hon. gentleman to accept a salary to which he did not conceive himself entitled; and it would certainly have been more creditable to him had he shown himself more stout and determined on the subject, instead of having evinced merely that coyness which had not deterred his friends from the adoption of the course that they had pursued. With regard to Mr. Barrow, he stood in some respects in a different situation from Mr. Croker. No man could have a greater respect for Mr. Barrow, knowing him only as a public man, than himself. He was a man of great abilities and extensive acquirements. But his office was not one of necessary continuance. If he was rightly informed, it had never existed before the naval administration of earl Spencer. The country ought naturally to look therefore to the immediate abolition of the office altogether, the gentlemen who held it during the war being allowed to retire with an adequate pension; instead of which this new, and at present useless office, was to have the salary attached to it increased by 500*l.* a year! At any rate, why the increase? During the peace of Amiens the salary of Mr. Barrow's office was 1,500*l.*, the salary of Mr. Croker's was 3,000*l.* What difference was there between the circumstances of the peace of Amiens and the peace of Paris, which should make any difference of salary necessary, except the circumstance that the peace of Paris was likely to be more lasting than the peace of Amiens? These were the difficulties against which the noble lord had to contend in reconciling the country to this measure. Hitherto no semblance of explanation had been uttered. It had indeed been said, that when gentlemen were taken from private life, and placed in official situations to which all their time was devoted, it was hard suddenly to reduce the emoluments to which they were accustomed. This might be hard upon Mr. Barrow, who, if he remained in office, would not go out with a change in the general administration. But it was not so with Mr. Croker, whose official situation was of such a nature, that if the administration were to be changed to-morrow, he, poor man, must go out of office with the rest, and without having any claim for a permanent salary!

He would now proceed to consider the amount of the proposed sum. After many discussions on the subject, they had at length got the noble lord to say that he would not object to any retrenchment on the ground of its being of inconsiderable amount. He (Mr. Brougham) was far from undervaluing the amount of the sum which it was in this case so desirable to retrench. One thousand a year, though it might appear trifling by the side of the hundreds of thousands and millions of our expenditure, was a sum, the wringing of which from those who had to pay the taxes in this country was in many cases a most distressing operation. That 1,000*l.* was half the sum which by the army estimates appeared to be the whole amount annually paid to the widows and orphans of those brave soldiers who had fallen in battle [Hear, hear!]; 2,000*l.* a year to the families of all those who had fought the battles of their country, and 1,000*l.* a year to the hon. gentleman who had only fought the battles of those ministers on whom parliament had pronounced their opinion, and recorded it by their vote of Monday last [Hear, hear!]! 10*l.* a year to the widow and orphans of a gallant veteran, and 1,000*l.* a year to a court favourite [Hear, hear!]! Good God! would the House hesitate for a moment in coming to a vote which should mark their reprobation of such a scandalous transaction, and prevent a repetition of it [Hear, hear!]!

Of the motion proposed by the hon. gentleman he cordially approved, not only because the sum to which it related was considerable, when compared with that allotted to the relief of the families of those who had so nobly served the state,—not only because the imposition of it would augment the misery of those who must be taxed for its production, not only because for that purpose (as appeared from the papers on the table) it might be necessary to issue 3 or 400 exchequer processes, in order to sell the wretched goods and furniture of the unhappy beings against whom they were directed, and thus to force from them their last shilling—not on those grounds alone did he approve of the motion; he approved of it because the sum in itself was so small, and because he wished the House to record their opinion with respect to it [Hear, hear!]. Should he tell the House why he wished this? He wished it, because it would be a pledge to the country that no larger extravagance, that no more momentous profligacy, would be permitted, when it was found that a minor profusion like that now before them could not, in a time like the present, escape the just and virtuous indignation of the Commons of England [Hear, hear!]. That House was indeed, in an awful situation. All eyes in the country were fixed upon them. They were fixed upon them with gratitude for their conduct on Monday—with solicitude for their future conduct. Above all was the nation anxious that parliament should not take fright at what they had done on that day; and that those who had then discharged their duty should not, under the influence of a weak apprehension, endeavour to make up for their firmness on that occasion by subsequent obsequiousness and acquiescence [Hear, hear!]. It had been again, and again, and again said, that the present was the time for the strictest economy. If that profession meant any thing, let it be proved by the vote of that night. If the House should agree, as he hoped they would, to the motion which an hon. member had so properly made, they would acquire the lasting gratitude of the country. They would for ever deter all persons in authority from squandering the public money. They would shew that no court favour could avail any man a penny, much less avail him 1000*l.* a year: and that to entitle any one to public remuneration, he must be actively serving the public, and not be the indolent holder of an office kept in existence for the sole purpose of continuing to him its salary [Hear, hear]. He repeated, that if the House consented to the motion of the honourable member, who deserved so well of the public by his having given parliament an opportunity to pronounce their opinion on this question, they would be indeed entitled to the confirmed gratitude of the country. They would prove that it was too late to allow a system of blind and profligate expenditure of the public money, founded, not on the public exigency, but on court favouritism alone, to continue for a single hour [Hear, hear!]. He would have those who had access to persons in high stations remember what had taken place in former days. It was not by squandering one sum, it was not by the commission of one profligate act, it was by the general determination not to regard that universal voice from one end of the island to the other, which loudly cried for retrenchment in the smallest as well as in the greatest of the national expenses—it was the turning of a deaf hear to that awful voice of the people, which proclaimed "there is no such thing in England at present as a trifling or an inconsiderable extravagance."—this was the conduct that threatened the most fatal consequences [Hear, hear!]. Much better would it be to listen to that solemn voice, than to build monuments to the descendants of the victims of legitimacy [Hear, hear, hear!]. Much better would it be, instead of doing honour to that family, to profit by its example [Hear, hear, hear!]; to recollect that by thwarting the prejudices, opposing the wishes, and pressing on the sore places of this nation, they were at length ousted from its throne [Hear, hear, hear!]. And yet their conduct was comparatively harmless and innocent. They were in a great measure betrayed by the tenderness of their consciences, by the nicety of their religious scruples. Far otherwise must those be estimated who entertained no scruples of religion, who experienced no tenderness of conscience; who, in utter disregard of the feelings of an oppressed and insulted nation, proceeded from one wasteful expenditure to another; who decorated and crowded their houses with the splendid results of their extravagance, who associated with the most profligate of human beings; who, when the gaols were filled with wretches, could not suspend for a moment their thoughtless amusements, to end the sad suspense between life and death; who, alone, or surrounded only by an establishment of mercenaries, and unable to trust to the attachment of the nation for their security, yet desired the House of Commons to enable them to lavish on their favourites the money extracted from the pockets of the suffering people of England [Loud cries of Hear, hear, hear!].

Mr. *Peel* expressed his persuasion, that whatever might be the opinion of the House on the salaries in question, whether they might think them too large or too small, there must be but one general feeling of indignation at the unfounded charges, at the unjust imputations, at the unfair and invidious comparisons made by the hon. and learned gentleman, between the amount of those salaries and objects with which they had no kind of connexion [Loud cries of Hear, hear!]. He repeated the terms "unfounded charges" and "unjust imputations;" because the hon. and learned gentleman, after having heard from his noble friend (he would never have heard it from his hon. friend) that it was contrary to the wishes of his hon. friend to have this salary permanently attached to his office, had nevertheless proceeded to characterise the transaction as a scandalous job—[Hear, hear!]. He repeated, that it was a most unfair insinuation to characterise the transaction as a scandalous job, or as proceeding from any considerations of court favour [Hear, hear, hear!]. In the commencement of his speech, the hon. and learned gentleman had professed having listened to his noble friend with an anxious wish to be satisfied, and had intimated that he should have been highly rejoiced if administration had been able to stand on high ground on this subject. Had he not heard this declaration, he confessed, that if he had been desired to name the man in the House to whom such a discovery would have been more painful than to any other, it would have been the hon. and learned gentleman on whom he should have fixed. From the whole tenour of that hon. and learned gentleman's conduct and arguments—from the feeling with which he received every remission of taxation on the part of his majesty's government—from the unaccountable (he was bound not to say intentional) misrepresentations which continually fell from him—and from a variety of other circumstances, he should certainly have considered the hon. and learned gentleman as the last man in that House to whom any retrenchment proposed by his majesty's ministers, and calculated to entitle them to claim the public approbation, would have proved satisfactory or agreeable. The hon. and learned gentleman had said, that the question was whether or not 1000*l.* a year should be added to the salary of the secretary of the admiralty. If that was the question it would be infinitely more proper to postpone it until the navy estimates should be before the House. The hon. mover had fallen into the error of the hon. and learned gentleman, in comparing these salaries with the rewards to those to whom no salaries could sufficiently testify the national gratitude—our gallant defenders. It was impossible to estimate military services by pecuniary considerations. There was something in the profession of arms—something in the nobleness of personal devotion—something in the imminent danger incurred—something in the nature of the glory acquired that mocked all attempt at compensation by money. [Hear, hear!]. If it were possible so to reward deeds of heroism, the debts of that nature due by this country, it would not be in the power of the most wealthy and the most liberal nation in the universe to discharge. But, because the nature and extent of military service prevented them from being thus rewarded, ought the civil servants of the country to be excluded from just remuneration? An hon. gentleman had said, that if such a sum was an adequate compensation for twelve hours labour in the day, such another sum would be an adequate compensation for six hours labour in the day. True—according to the rule of three. But he was sure the House would not be of opinion that the number of hours employed ought to be the criterion of the salary that should be received. The confidence reposed in the officer—the nature of the duties entrusted to him—the abstraction from other avocations in life, to which he could never return—all these circumstances were to be considered in the appointment of the salary. The order in council which had been issued on this subject was necessary, but depended for its confirmation on the sanction of the House. The question before them involved this principle—whether the salaries of public offices ought to be lower in time of peace than in time of war? If that principle were to be established, why was it to be acted upon with respect to the admiralty alone? It was always very difficult to say what was the exact amount of salary commensurate with the duties of any official situation. Nothing, however, could be more disadvantageous to the country, than to reduce those salaries so much, as to prevent the offices from being held by any persons who had not also private fortunes. Nothing could be so aristocratic in its tendency, as to deny to public officers a salary, not merely equal to their current expenses, but which should enable them eventually to retire from the public service with comfort and independence.

Mr. *Tierney* said, that in the course of the discussion two questions had been brought before the House: first, whether it was right to increase the salaries of persons composing the different revenue boards? Secondly, whether it was right to augment the salaries of the two secretaries of the admiralty, according to the order in council? Upon the first it was unnecessary, at present, to call for the opinion of parliament: but, upon the second, too early a decision could not be had. Never had a more extraordinary speech than that of the noble lord been heard within the walls of parliament; and never had any speech obtained a more extraordinary reception. The noble lord had commenced with vehemently deprecating all clamour, with his usual design of exciting it among his friends. The purpose, however, had completely failed; for while the noble lord was clamouring against clamour, the gentlemen who sat near him observed a most melancholy and disheartening silence. The silence was most profound, and gave a fine opportunity for the display of the musical tones of the noble lord's voice. Thus defeated by his own partisans, the noble lord then threw himself upon his character: no man, he hoped, would refuse to give him credit for a sincere and anxious disposition to promote the utmost economy. But still the same awful silence was preserved. Mr. Tierney said, he had seen unfortunate persons on their trial at the Old Bailey, and the noble lord's situation was scarcely less deplorable or pitiable [Hear, and a laugh]. The poor culprit, driven to his defence, called witnesses to character—so did the noble lord, but none of them answered! His next step still kept up the parallel; for in the extremity of his case he had proceeded to read a long paper, not having any counsel to assist (as was most unhappily too often the situation of the noble lord), in which he endeavoured to show, in the teeth of all the evidence, not only that he was not guilty, but that he was the most ill-used man that had ever appeared at the bar. As for economy, the noble lord asserted in his paper that it had been the object of his life; that he had lived under various masters in different places, giving universal satisfaction, and evincing an unceasing anxiety to save to the uttermost farthing. Next he set forth the expenses he had spared his employers, and those that he had intended to have spared them, if he had been allowed to continue in service; and it could not be denied that the noble lord had never shown any great anxiety to quit a good place in which he was once firmly seated [Hear, and a laugh]. The prisoner at the Old Bailey usually followed his assertions with a statement of facts—most probably false; and the noble lord had entered into a detail most certainly incomprehensible, concluding with large promises of future good behaviour, customary with persons in the deplorable situation of being put upon their trial.—But to proceed more seriously to the subject of debate, he begged to advert to the reasons urged for augmenting the salaries of the commissioners of customs and excise. The noble lord had stated, that urgent requests for this purpose had been made since 1806, and that they ought now to be granted in consideration of long and meritorious services; but, upon inquiry, it would probably be found that those who filled the offices ten years ago were dead, and then where were the long and meritorious services of their successors? The House would recollect, also, that the retiring pension was regulated by the amount of salary, and that to these places was attached an extensive patronage, which in truth was the reason for the increase. Undoubtedly patronage was valuable; but this was the first time it had been avowedly measured out as worth so many hundreds sterling. In the first place A, on retiring, was to have a pension because he lost the patronage; and B, who succeeded him, was to have an increased salary because he took it: and yet the noble lord had gravely desired the House not to take any alarm, but to leave all matters to his direction, and he would save as much money as possible. This subject, however, was not now to be determined; but in the mean time he requested gentlemen to make inquiries, more especially into the additional labours which formed the excuse for this augmentation. Upon the immediate question—the salaries of the principal secretary of the admiralty, and of a most respectable individual, Mr. Barrow, the under secretary—it was objected, that the discussion could more properly be entered upon in the committee of supply, and a precedent of the paymastership of widows pensions (the abolition of which appeared by none of the documents upon the table) had been cited as an authority. He could not help thinking that the question now came most fairly to issue, and taking it up in this early stage would be an evidence to the country of the anxiety of the House to watch even the most trifling disbursement. It was true that the order in council originated in a similar proceeding when earl Spencer was at the head of the admiralty in 1800; at that time the secretary of the admiralty was paid by fees, which in war amounted to 12 or 14,000*l.* per annum, though in peace they were less. The committee on the fees of offices in 1786 had recommended that a fixed war salary of 3,000*l.* a year, and a peace salary of 2,000*l.*, should be given instead of all fees; but earl Spencer, thinking that pay inadequate, had raised each of them 1,000*l.*, and thus they had remained established until the present moment. It was a mistake, therefore, to state that the fixed emolument was 4,000*l.* a year, unless it were supposed that we should be in a state of perpetual hostilities: 1,000*l.* a year had been added only as a compensation for heavier duties, but the actual amount of salary was only 3,000*l.* a year, because it was fair to suppose, that the country would enjoy more of the blessings of peace than it would endure the calamities of war. At the peace of Amiens (contrary to the assertions of some hon. gentlemen) sir Evan Nepean had received only 3,000*l.* a year, with perfect satisfaction; and had he wished to augment it, he must have removed the then first lord of the admiralty, earl St. Vincent, who would never have given his consent—though the noble lord now holding that high station felt no such difficulty. Soon afterwards the board of naval inquiry was appointed, and it was followed by the commission of revision, instituted for the express purpose of undoing what their predecessors had done. That commission was in fact a mere party manœuvre to defeat necessary and wholesome regulations. Of course, when the lords of the admiralty wished to recommend an increase of salary, they resorted to the report of this commission; and in doing so, they had set out their own reasons for the present augmentation, namely, that those who devoted their whole time to their arduous functions in war, were entitled to pensions on retiring from office. This argument might apply to some poor clerk in the office who had no other means of gaining his sustenance, but could not apply to the two secretaries; for even if the admiralty were burnt to the ground, or their offices annihilated in any other way, the one in verse, and the other in prose, would be able, no doubt, to gain a very handsome livelihood [Hear! and a laugh]. The lords of the admiralty in their representation also stated, that the business of the two offices had not much lessened since the restoration of tranquillity; that circumstance, it was admitted, therefore, was to be considered: and if the expenditure of the department was reduced from 27 to 7 millions, he could not help thinking, that however sleepless the nights of the secretaries might hitherto have been, they would now be able to enjoy a welcome repose. The principal secretary, it appeared, was very unwilling that the increase should be made upon his account; but the lords of the admiralty soon set him right: they told him that it was not on his account—for, said they, " if we allow this obstinate gentleman to escape from receiving 1,000*l.* a year, God knows what may happen to us—we, the lords of the admiralty, shall soon be attacked; therefore you, Mr. Secretary, as a good and faithful servant, must not consider your own character, but the advantage of your masters, and you must pocket up the 1,000*l.* in order that we may retain ours."

It was rather singular that an administration making such professions of economy should, the moment they found a man who refused 1,000*l.* of the public money, compel him to accept it. This refractory secretary seemed to have given them much trouble; for perceiving that he was serious (a fact they could scarcely credit), they ran directly to their neighbours, the lords of the treasury, to require immediate assistance, for a new mutiny had broken out in the navy, and they, or their salaries, were in immediate danger [Continued laughter and cheers]. The lords of the treasury take the alarm. "God bless us," say they, "we shall be the next to suffer—the country will take the alarm, and we shall all be reduced." A council of war upon the public purse was instantly held —an order in council was issued, and the unfortunate secretary, for his rebellious disposition in wishing to save the money of an oppressed nation, was punished—by being compelled to accept the 1,000*l.* [Hear, hear!]. Did ministers really imagine that the country would be thus imposed upon? Were they aware of the miserable figure they would cut in the public eye by this deplorable contrivance? All men ought to take the alarm at this exposure of a deliberate system—he would not say of extravagance, but—of resistance to every thing that looked like economy, or the diminution of the salaries of persons who had now little or no duties to perform. The whole administration made common cause against the country on the subject of expenditure. All men must admit that the first secretary of the admiralty had with talent and activity discharged his important duties during the war, and well deserved reward; but he might wish to retire, and on what principle was his successor to be allowed so large a salary, which he had done nothing to deserve? No eloquence could heighten the importance of this question. The noble lord and his colleagues were brought to a fair trial before their country. Now was the time when the question was to be decided—"Are you, or are you not, economists?" The noble lord might make speeches, and long speeches; no man could make them oftener or longer; but he could not persuade the people of England out of the exercise of their common sense. Their understandings would not be deceived; and the conduct of ministers on this occasion would be a test of what was to be expected from them in future. He should not be surprised if, in the course of the evening, the secretary to the admiralty should rise and avow his intention never to accept this odious addition. If he did so, he (Mr. T.) hoped that the House would, notwithstanding, come to a vote on the question. In the name of God, let ministers have a fair trial; but let judgment be pronounced.

Mr. *Wellesley Pole* said, that the right hon. gentleman who had just sat down, had, with an acuteness and perspicuity which peculiarly belonged to him, divided the subjects brought before the House, in the clearest manner. He had said a great deal in the first part of his speech on the increase of salaries to the commissioners of excise and customs, but he had admitted that this was not a proper time for discussing the propriety of that measure, but that it would be necessary to defer it till the information called for, had been laid before the House. The question for consideration at present was simply this:—whether or not the salaries of the secretaries of the admiralty had been improperly increased? He was not certain that he should have thought it necessary to trouble the House on this occasion, had it not been for the course which the hon. and learned gentleman opposite (Mr. Brougham) had thought it his duty to pursue; but it was impossible for him, as a member of his majesty's government, to hear, without setting his face against it, such language as he had never listened to in that House before [Hear, hear]. The right hon. gentleman (Mr. Tierney) had set out by denying that ministers had given any proofs of a disposition to practise that economy which had been recommended to parliament. To him he said, the statement of the noble lord was not at all satisfactory—was all a delusion—and the reductions that were to be made were such as must of necessity have been made by any administration. He was not surprised that the paper which his noble friend had read, was not satisfactory to the right hon. gentleman. This, however, though correctly described but as a rough sketch of the plans of ministers, would prove to the House and to the country, that the attention of government was anxiously directed to every quarter where retrenchment could safely be effected, and that their first care after the close of the war was what establishments growing out of the war could be reduced; and it was not till this inquiry was concluded, that they ought to consider whether any of those that were in existence before the commencement of the late contest could be put down. That the hon. and learned gentleman also should not be pleased with the conduct of ministers, was not to him a matter of astonishment. He had never had any great affection for those that set on that side of the House; but to night he had completely thrown off the mask; and when guarding himself against being supposed to entertain any personal disrespect for the gentlemen whose increased salaries were now under discussion, the hon. and learned gentleman had declared, that he had no objection to be thought to feel personal disrespect for the noble lord (Castlereagh) and his colleagues. After such a declaration he (Mr. Pole) could expect no candour from that gentleman [Hear, hear!].

Mr. *Wynn* spoke to order. He submitted that the conduct of the right hon. gentleman was disorderly in asserting he could expect no candour from the hon. and learned gentleman.

Mr. *W. Pole* was not aware that he had been out of order. Whenever he heard an hon. gentleman declare that he had no objection to be thought to feel personal disrespect for ministers, he contended he had a right to assume that from such a quarter he could expect no candour [Hear, hear!].

Mr. *Wynn* called upon the chair to decide if the right hon. gentleman was not out of order. Whether his hon. and learned friend, while speaking, had been disorderly, he would not now stop to inquire [Marks of disapprobation and cheering]. If he had been disorderly, it was the duty of the House immediately to check him. This could not be done afterwards, if it was not done at the moment. He was ready to submit to the Speaker's judgment, and called upon the right hon. gentleman to say whether it was not disorderly for one member to assert he could expect no candour from another [Hear, hear].

The *Speaker* said, in the course of their debates many expressions passed, which were not strictly in order. Called upon to give an opinion, he was bound to say, it was contrary to the rules of that House for one hon. gentleman to assert he could expect no candour from another [Hear, hear!].

Mr. *W. Pole* resumed. He congratulated the hon. gentleman opposite, on the success of his appeal. He (Mr. W. Pole) was not much in the habit of calling members to order, but was anxious to give them their full swing, which, indeed, they failed not to take, well knowing the patience of himself and his friends near him. He had been called to order because he was coming round to comment on what was disorderly. He gave the gentlemen opposite joy of their successful effort to prevent him from doing this, but he neither envied them their candour nor their victory [Hear, hear!]. The hon. and learned gentleman had not disclaimed a feeling of personal disrespect towards his noble friend and the chancellor of the exchequer. He (Mr. W. Pole) had not the smallest objection to this, and if he should repeat it, he would not call the hon. and learned gentleman to order; and he should not now have touched upon it had no more than this been said. The hon. and learned gentleman had a right to attack the government, but no right to hold language like that which he had used, to make such an attack as—thank God! he had never heard before in that House—and to bring forward insinuations wholly without foundation against the highest authority in this country [Hear, hear!]. The hon. and learned gentleman had thought proper in his speech to use such expressions, as in his life he had never before heard any man utter, who attempted to call himself a friend to the house of Brunswick, and who was anxious to support that establishment which had grown out of our glorious revolution. The hon. and learned gentleman had stated a profligate system to be acted upon at court—he had described the errors of the Stuarts to be comparatively harmless; they were bigots whose delusions were excusable; but now there was no feeling for the distresses of the country—no conscience to suggest relief for the people to be found in the high quarter referred to [Hear, hear!]. This was in substance what the hon. and learned gentleman had said, and this, till now, he had never heard from any friend to the present royal family, or to the British constitution. Whether this was a course proper to be pursued, he should leave to the House to determine.—On the question immediately before the House touching the admiralty, he was surprised to find the hon. and learned gentleman so totally unacquainted with the constitution of that establishment. He had stated the office of the second secretary of the admiralty to be a new one. In this the hon. and learned gentleman was wrong. Sir Philip Stephens was appointed to that office in 1759, and the office had been kept up ever since, though Mr. Barrow had not been placed in it till the time of the late lord Melville. The hon. and learned gentleman had described this office to be a part of the establishment which ought to be discontinued. In this he was wrong. He would tell him it was impossible for the routine of admiralty business to be performed without two secretaries, even though it should be diminished to a third part of what it was at present. It would thus be seen that the hon. and learned gentleman was quite wrong in his facts. Another proof of this was furnished by the comparison on which he had ventured between the amount of the increase which had taken place on the secretary's salary, and the sums paid to the widows and orphans of those who had lost their lives in the service. According to this (he had seen a similar statement in a newspaper that morning), the increase complained of was equal to half of the sum set apart for the relief of those he had mentioned. Let the hon. and learned gentleman look to the estimates which would come under the consideration of the House on Monday, and he would find an addition of 49,000*l.* was made to them, to enable the admiralty to pay the whole of the widows' pensions now on the list. He felt it his duty to censure the attempt which had been made to bring into contact the remuneration given to civil servants, with the allowances of military or naval officers, and the widows' pensions. If there was a disposition to complain of the provision made for officers wounded in the service, he was ready to meet the gentlemen opposite on that question, and to show that in what had been granted for their relief, this country had always gone further than any other country ever did, and had now gone much further than it ever went before. On such a subject for party purposes, it was not quite fair to hold the language which had that night been heard. He must also complain of what had been said with respect to the abandonment of the malt tax. In giving up this impost, ministers had endeavoured to meet the wishes of the people, but they were not influenced by a mean desire of acquiring popularity with the people, and it was not liberal to endeavour to make them see the measure adopted for their relief in so odious a light. The language which the hon. and learned gentleman had used, went to this, if he had understood him right—that the conduct of ministers in giving up the malt tax ought to encourage the public to demand that all the other taxes should be taken off. If this were really the argument of the hon. and learned gentleman, it was radically wrong, and could not redound to his credit, or tend to promote the welfare of the country.—After hearing sentiments like those which had fallen from the hon. and learned gentleman this night, he could neither expect nor desire his support. This mortification, he doubted not, ministers would be spared. Should it at any time prove otherwise, he should immediately suspect the course they were pursuing was in some respect erroneous, and feel not a little alarm at finding they had so dangerous a supporter. He was surprised that the right hon. gentleman who spoke last should have made any complaint against the conduct of the commissioners of naval revision. Their names (Lord Barham, Mr. Fordyce, Admiral Domet, and Mr. Searle) ought alone to have left them above reproach. The reports which they had made, were as able and as judicious as had ever been produced on any subject whatever. All the late improvements in ship-building—all the reforms in the subordinate boards,—and every advantageous change which had been made in our navy, for several years past, had been suggested by those commissioners. There was no branch of the service to which their exertions had not been successfully extended, and it was a libel on them to say they had only been employed in undoing what had been done by their predecessors, when, instead of labouring to overthrow their plans, many of them were embodied in the reports of this commission, and carried into effect on such recommendation. Under these circumstances, he was surprised that the right hon. gentleman should throw an odium on these commissioners, and speak slightingly of such a set of reports. The right hon. gentleman he admitted to have accurately stated the history of the establishment of the salaries of the two secretaries of the admiralty. On the fees (which formerly paid them in a great measure) being abolished, the salary of the chief secretary was fixed at 3000*l.* per annum in time of peace, to be increased to 4000*l.* in time of war; and the salary of the second secretary was fixed at 2000*l.* But the alteration which had taken place, was mentioned, as if it had been determined upon in the first moments of peace. This supposition would be at once refuted, by a reference to the memorial in which it was recommended, which was dated the 25th of March last year, when the nation was arming for a war, which the gentlemen opposite thought likely to last for several years, and when nobody suspected we should immediately return to a state of peace. It was then from the smallness of the salaries of the admiralty clerks, (which could not be diminished in peace without great risk of wanting their services on the recurrence of a period at which they would be demanded) it was judged best to fix them at their present rate, and to bar all future application for a further increase. This arrangement had been fairly described by his noble friend. He was entitled to credit for the statement which he had made, and not to that ridicule with which it had been attempted to cover it. If it should be the opinion of the House that 3000*l.* rather than 4000*l.* ought to be the salary of the secretary of the admiralty, it would be for them to determine upon this when the estimates came before the House. Then, should it be their pleasure to make such a reduction, it could be properly effected, and then there would be no complaint on the part of his hon. friend (Mr. Croker), or on that of any of his colleagues. But if this were to be done, he hoped it would be done fairly and openly, and not by a sort of side wind, as it would be if the present motion were carried. Again, adverting to the paper read by his noble friend, he contended, that notwithstanding what had been said against it, it showed on the part of government an absolute determination to make every possible reduction in all the public establishments. These would be more distinctly seen in good time, and he hoped no premature exertion on the part of the hon. gentlemen opposite would prevail upon the House to go into any further inquiry on the subject, before the proper time for doing this had arrived.

Mr. *Brougham* said, he understood, that a most pointed and personal attack had been made upon him in his absence, by the right hon. gentleman. If he were rightly informed what he had said with respect to the illustrious house of Brunswick, had been greatly misrepresented. He would repeat the words which he understood the right hon. gentleman to have used in his speech, which he sincerely regretted he had not the good fortune to hear. He was informed, the right hon. gentleman had described him to have that night taken off the mask, and to have disclosed principles hostile [No, no!] or unfriendly to the Brunswick family, and the British constitution [Cries of No, no!]. It was no light matter, that language should be held, respecting any member, that might be thus construed.

Mr. *Wellesley Pole* replied, that what he had said was still in the recollection of the House, and he was certain they would agree in saying, that he had not used any words in the sense which the hon. and learned member had just stated.

Mr. *Brougham* said, he was then to understand the right hon. gentleman, that he had not only never made use of such expressions, but that he had never said any thing that imported any charge of the nature described against his principles.

Mr. *Wellesley Pole* said, he had described the hon. and learned gentleman to have brought forward unfounded insinuations against a certain high quarter (he had not named any individual), and he had put it to the House if such a course was fit to be pursued. With respect to the principles of the hon. and learned gentleman, he had said nothing of their having been hostile to the house of Brunswick, but he had said, that after the principles which the hon. and learned gentleman had developed, that he could not be surprised that he was not satisfied with the statement made by his noble friend, and should be sorry if ministers were favoured with his support. He had also said, that the hon. and learned gentleman had thrown off the mask in his attack upon ministers, when he said he had no objection to be thought to feel disrespect towards them.

Mr. *Bankes* rose to speak to the question, and Mr. Brougham rose at the same time to explain. The former was loudly called upon to proceed, and it was some minutes before order was restored.

Mr. *Brougham* said, it was of some consequence to him that a further explanation should be offered of his conduct [Cries of "Spoke, spoke!"]. He did not wish to prevent the hon. gentleman from being heard, and was sorry to detain the House for a moment. If he had uttered any thing that could indicate sentiments like those which it had been understood were imputed to him, it was the duty of the

House to interfere on the instant, as had always been done on similar occasions. He had only to add he was as sincere a friend to the illustrious family now on the throne, and as sensible of the benefits derived to the nation from its rule as the right hon. gentleman, or any of his colleagues could be, though he showed his feeling in a different way, by desiring to see the royal person now at the head of the government, surrounded by better advisers.

Mr. *Bankes* felt persuaded that if his hon. and learned friend had been aware of the import of the observations he had thought proper to make upon the illustrious house of Brunswick, he would have abstained from making them. He had heard with displeasure, and even indignation, some of the expressions made use of by his hon. and learned friend; and he could not help saying that they were entirely out of all the rules and regulations of parliament [Hear, hear!]. With respect to the question before the House, he really did think that the proper time for discussion was subsequent to the estimates being laid before the House; and although his own decided opinion was, that the increase of these salaries in time of peace was an improper act on the part of government, yet he should wait until the whole information was before the House. He bore testimony to the high respectability of the gentlemen composing the committee of revision, as well as to their endeavours to produce economy in every department; but still he must maintain, that at present there was no reason for raising the salaries of the two secretaries of the admiralty, and more particularly when the decrease in the price of almost every article of provision was considered, and when the distressed state of the country under the heavy weight of taxation was reflected upon even for an instant. For these reasons he should certainly, when the question came under discussion, oppose the vote for raising the salaries, not only of the two secretaries in question, but also of every other department, where he should see no manifest reason for such an increase: but as the present moment was not the time at which it could be fairly discussed, he should vote for passing to the order of the day.

Lord *Cochrane* objected to the increased salary of the secretary of the admiralty, at a time when his labour was so considerably diminished. He should not object to any increase of salary, if it were made in behalf of those persons whose labours still continued the same in peace as in war; and he instanced the astronomer royal and his assistant, the salary of the former not amounting to more than one-fourth of the increase in that of the secretary of the Admiralty, and that of the latter not being one-tenth. If a further investigation were made in these salaries, it would be seen that the librarian of the admiralty had but half the salary of the housekeeper, and that the assistant-housekeeper's salary equalled that of the librarian.

Mr. *Croker* said:—Sir; it was not my intention to take any part in the debate of this night; but I thought it my duty to attend in my place to offer any explanation, that might be demanded. I am sure the House will feel that during part of the debate I could not possibly have been placed in a more painful situation.]Hear, hear!] The pain, however, has been lessened, if not altogether removed, by the terms in which his majesty's ministers have been pleased to speak of my conduct; and by the circumstance of that which they have stated having been received as I could wish, by those whose good opinions I most anxiously desire. One hon. member has treated the subject with taunt and ridicule. I think I may venture to appeal to the feelings of that individual, and call upon him to acknowledge that he has done it injustice, by treating it with so much levity and warmth. I now leave the House, resolved not to vote on the question. For myself, I feel no interest in it at all, and have only to add the expression of my regret, that justice could not be done to the merits of an honourable and humble class of public servants, without my name being brought forward. Mr. Croker then withdrew.

Sir *John Marjoribanks* justified the increase given by government to the commissioners of the revenue boards in Scotland. He stated, that in the year 1744 the salary of a commissioner was 500*l.* a year, the same as that to a judge of the court of session; that their salaries continued, of the same amount, for above 40 years; that a judge's appointment had been most properly increased to 2000*l.* whilst that of a commissioner had been only 800*l.*, till now increased to 1000*l.*, and that the only objection in his humble opinion to the measure was, that the increase was not adequate to the station in society of the commissioners. He believed it would be found that Mr. Earle, the chairman of the board of customs, had been offered that situation during the administration of lord Grenville, and that, as the one he held in the London board held out prospects not only flattering, but certain to lead to promotion, he took several days to consider of the offer, and certainly was led to accept it under the prospect of an increase of salary. Sir John had much pleasure in bearing testimony to the general opinion in Scotland of the merits of Mr. Earle. He believed government were well aware of his exertions in the improvement of the revenue, and the merchants in Scotland were highly sensible of the facilities given to trade by those arrangements.

Mr. *Tierney*, in explanation, stated his knowledge of the fact, that Mr. Earle had been taken from the situation, as represented by the hon. baronet, and his merits in the arrangements he had made, and that he had accepted the office in the prospect of an increase of salary, which undoubtedly ought to be realized.

Mr. *Methuen* shortly replied; and maintained, that if a system of economy was not immediately set on foot, the country would be involved in the horrors of irretrievable ruin.

The question was loudly called for, and a division then took place on the amendment moved—that the House do proceed to the other orders of the day, when the numbers were

For the amendment	159
Against it	130
Majority	29

List of the Minority.

Abercrombie, hon. J.
Atherley, A.
Atkins, J.
Babington, T.
Baker, J.
Baring, A.
Bennet, hon. H. G.
Birch, J.
Brougham, H.
Brand, hon. T.
Browne, D.
Burdett, sir F.
Burrell, hon. P. D.
Burrell, W.
Butterworth, J.
Byng, G.
Calvert, C.
Calvert, N.
Calcraft, J.
Calley, T.
Campbell, lord J.
Campbell, hon. J.
Cavendish, lord G.
Cavendish, hon. H.
Cavendish, hon. C.
Caulfield, hon. H.
Chaloner, R.
Coke, T.
Cochrane, lord
Curwen, J. C.
Dickenson, W.
Drake, T.
Dundas, hon. L.
Duncannon, visc.
Fazakerley, N.
Fergusson, sir R. C.
Fitzgerald, lord W.
Finlay, K.
Fitzroy, lord J.
Foley, hon. A.
Foley, T.
Forbes, C.
Frank, F.
Fremantle, W.
Gooch, T. S.
Gordon, R.
Grenfell, P.
Guise, sir W.
Heron, sir R.
Howorth, H.
Hornby, E.
Hurst, R.
Harcourt, J.
Jervois, G. P.
King, sir J. D.
Knox, T.
Langton, W. G.
Lambton, J. G.
Lefevre, C. S.
Lemon, sir W.
Lewis, T. F.
Lloyd, sir E.
Lloyd, J. M.
Lockhart, J. I.
Lyttelton, hon. W. H.
Macdonald, J.
Maitland, hon. C.
Mackintosh, sir J.
Madocks, W. A.
Martin, H.
Martin, J.
Marryat, J.
Manning, W.
Milton, visc.
Morland, S. B.
Molyneux, H. H.
Moore, P.
Mostyn, sir T.
Monck, sir C.
Morpeth, visc.
Newport, sir J.
Neville, hon. R.
Neale, sir H. B.
Newman, R. W.
North, D.
Northey, W.
Nugent, lord
Ossulston, lord
Osborne, lord F. G.
Peirse, H.
Pelham, hon. C. A.
Philips, G.
Piggott, sir A.
Plunkett, rt. hn. W. C.
Ponsonby, rt hon. G.
Ponsonby, hon. F. C.
Powlett, hn. W. Vane
Prittie, hon. F. A.
Pollington, visc.
Pym, F.
Ramsden, J. C.
Romilly, sir S.
Rowley, sir Wm.
Russell, lord Wm.
Russell, R. G.
Sebright, sir John
Shelley, sir Tim.
Scudamore, R.
Sharpe, R.
Smith, John
Smith, Abel
Smyth, J. H.
Speirs, Archibald
Stanley, lord
Thornton, Samuel
Taylor, Charles
Tierney, rt. hon. G.
Townshend lord J.
Vernon, Granville
Vyse, R. W. H.
Warre, John A.
Waldegrave, hn. capt.
Western, C. C.
Wharton, John
Whitmore, Thomas
Wilkins, Walter
Williams, Owen
Wright, J. Atkins
Wynn, sir W. W.
Wynn, C. W.

TELLERS.

Methuen, Paul
Smith, William

PAIRED OFF.

Bolland, John
Elliot, rt. hon. W.
Halsey, Joseph
Hughes, W. Lewis
Pelham, hon. G. A.
Russell, lord G. W.
Russell, lord John
Smith, Samuel

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Friday, March 22.

PROPERTY TAX—MILITARY ESTABLISHMENTS.] Lord *Grenville* rose to present a Petition from the gentry, clergy, freeholders, and inhabitants of the county of Denbigh, praying to be relieved from the war burthens, and for economy in the public expenditure. His lordship took that opportunity of expressing his high satisfaction at the rejection of the income tax, and at the further relief which was intended to be afforded by giving up the war malt tax. The taking off these two burthens would, he was convinced, afford a great relief to the pressure that now weighed upon the people, and which rendered it peculiarly inexpedient that a severe and galling impost should be fastened upon them in a time of peace, which could alone be justified by the necessitous exigencies of a period of war. He trusted also, that the strictest attention would now be paid to economy in the public expenditure, and that a reduction would be made in those enormous military establishments which had been proposed to the consideration of parliament, in order that the public expenditure might be rendered proportionate to the diminished exigencies of the country, and to our diminished resources.

The Earl of *Derby* presented a petition from Manchester against the property tax, and in recommendation of the most rigid economy in all departments of the public service, and also suggesting the propriety of abolishing sinecure places and pensions, by which the public would be greatly relieved from their burthens. The noble earl, in presenting the petition, stated, that a requisition had been sent to the borough reeve, to call a meeting of the inhabitants of Manchester and its vicinity, for the purposes of this petition; that some objection had been made to the word " vicinity," which was then left out; and that afterwards a counter-requisition was presented, in consequence of which the borough reeve did not call the meeting. Those who were adverse, however, to the meeting, did not oppose its object, but only stated that parliament had already taken up the matter, and that the petition was unnecessary. Those, however, who signed the former requisition, themselves called a meeting, which was most numerously and respectably attended; and there this petition was agreed to, together with another to the House of Commons. From the necessity of sending off the petition to the Commons sooner than that to their lordships, the present petition was more numerously signed, having 1,500 very respectable signatures; and so careful had the petitioners been that no improper signatures should appear to it, that they had cut off a sheet, on account of its having some signatures by those who were not so nearly concerned in this matter. The property tax they described as most unjust and unequal, and one which ought not to exist in time of peace. The cause of its being presented at so late a period was, that he had been prevented by indisposition from coming down sooner with it. It might, perhaps, appear useless now to be presenting petitions against the property tax; but though it was got rid of for the present, it was still of importance that the opinion of the country respecting it should be thoroughly known, and he trusted in God, that the decided reprobation of that tax, which had been shown both by the country and by parliament, would prevent the present or any future ministers from resorting to it, even in a state of war, without the most extreme necessity. On that point, then, and also on the necessity for economy in all the public departments, he fully agreed with the petitioners. As to another point in the petition—the abolition of unnecessary sinecures and pensions, he could not entirely agree with the petitioners as to the extent of relief that might be derived from that measure. They said that, in their judgment, the measure would render it possible to carry on the public service without new burthens. He agreed with them thus far, that a considerable saving might in this way be effected; and it was their lordships absolute duty to inquire with the utmost diligence into all branches of expenditure, with a view to reduction to the lowest possible amount. The people had borne with astonishing patience an unexampled burthen of taxation, and had now a right to the fullest possible relief. He wished likewise to call their lordships attention to the pledge which they had given in their address, in answer to the Prince Regent's Speech, to pay the most rigid attention to economy; and they could not better redeem that pledge, than by attending to the prayer of those petitioners, and acting accordingly. When the noble earl opposite (Liverpool) recommended economy in the speech from the throne, he could not suppose that the noble earl merely meant to round a period, or to catch at a little popularity by the use of the word only. Yet when he considered the attempts which were made in the other House to check and baffle economical inquiries, and the decision of the majority in their lordships House on a late occasion, he could not help feeling great apprehensions that these economical reforms would not be carried into effect.

He, however, had never given his vote with more pleasure than he did on the late motions of his two noble friends; and therefore he had redeemed the pledge which he had given as far as he had the power. He wished to state that, in mentioning that a counter-requisition had been sent to the borough reeve, he did not mean to impute blame in any quarter.

The Marquis of *Lansdowne* said, that he should not now have risen to congratulate the House and the country upon the decision of the other House in regard to the property tax, were it not that he was anxious to seize this opportunity of making a few observations on the means which it appeared to be in the contemplation of ministers to adopt in lieu of that tax. He did, however, most sincerely congratulate parliament and the nation on the rejection of that tax, and also on the relief afforded by the discontinuance of the malt tax—a proceeding which, in his opinion, was the best calculated to lay the foundation for the increase of the wealth, glory, fame, and future prosperity of the country. But he now rose chiefly from his anxiety that the people should feel and know the real state of the finances of the nation; for though a present relief was afforded, the people must not therefore conclude that the financial difficulties of the country were removed, and they ought to be fully aware that the means now proposed to be adopted to supply the place of the property tax (he alluded to a loan in time of peace), though not absolutely unfit to be resorted to, was still liable to very strong and important objections. With respect to the amount of the loan, too, he thought it of the highest importance that it should be confined to the very lowest possible point. It was necessary to state this, that the people might not imagine that all concurred in the opinion which they might have heard given in another place — that it was not important what the amount of the loan should be. The first object was, to give relief to the country; the next object was, to relieve the money-market also, and to support public credit, which would be best done by looking at the more solid resource that might be found in the revision of the military and other estimates, and in the reduction of that immense expenditure of twenty-nine millions, which it was proposed to continue in time of peace. Such a revision and reduction must, he should conceive, be the interest of the government, beyond that of all others, after the decision of the other House on the property tax. But the expedient of resorting to the public credit for the means of expenditure was, however powerful a resource, a dangerous one from its facility even in time of war. But it was most particularly dangerous in time of peace, and the expedient of loans ought never to be resorted to at such a period, without a clear understanding as to the amount in each year, and the length of time during which this method of providing for the public service was to be continued. The loan, therefore, both as to amount and duration, ought to be rigidly watched, otherwise the most destructive evils of the property tax and other burthens, must, sooner or later, recoil on the country with redoubled force. They must then again recur to that tax which had been so happily rejected, and which modifications would only have made inefficacious, without removing its most objectionable points. He now, then, rose to call upon their lordships to watch the loan with the severest vigilance, both as to its amount and duration; to investigate the estimates and accounts of every department with the most anxious care; to pursue the whole through every particular item, with a firm determination to strike off every thing which should not appear to be absolutely necessary: for their lordships might be assured that this was the system and mode of proceeding on which the present safety, and future prosperity of the nation depended.

The Earl of *Liverpool* said, that though this was not the time to enter upon the general question, yet, after the speech of the noble marquis, he must trouble their lordships with a few observations. The admonition of the noble marquis applied not merely to the policy which must be adopted in consequence of the rejection of the income tax, but to any policy that could have been adopted under the present circumstances. Whether the property tax were continued, or the expedient of a loan were resorted to, as it must now unavoidably be, in either case the raising so great a sum for the supplies of the year must be founded on this principle, that the establishments were not larger than the necessities of the occasion required. It was on that ground, and on that only, that he (lord Liverpool) had the other night argued that such establishments were called for; and he should have conceived it contrary to common sense, to argue for greater establishments than he thought to be necessary for the interests of the country. He could assure the noble marquis that no one could feel more strongly than he did, the inexpediency of loans in time of peace, and his object had been to avoid them. It had been his judgment—and his opinion had not changed—that the continuance of the property tax at the amount which had been proposed, would have formed, not only the best plan of finance, but also the most effectual relief to the distresses of the country. There were two modes of relief to be adopted under the present circumstances: the one was, to relieve public credit, and inspire confidence in our resources, by raising the supplies without having recourse to a loan—the other mode was to reduce the amount of taxation, which was at any rate intended to have been done to a certain extent. He had thought that the best relief, on the whole, would have been to refrain from going into the money market for a loan; and on that opinion he had acted as far as he could. But the noble marquis seemed to think that it had been somewhere stated, that it was of no consequence whether the loan were 6 or 8 millions. Nothing of that kind was said in the sense in which the noble marquis appeared to understand the words; but the great object had been to carry on the service without having recourse to a loan at all. If, however, they were reduced to the necessity of resorting to a loan, then it might be very fairly said that the difference between six and eight millions was not a consideration sufficient to outweigh the advantage that would result from relieving the country from the malt tax, as in that case they could not have the advantage of not going into the money market at all. In this, therefore, there was certainly no inconsistency. As to the application of all this to the question of expenditure and establishments, this was not the time to say any thing on that subject; but whatever policy was adopted at present, it was perfectly clear, that the establishments and expenditure ought to be as low as they could be consistently with the interest and security of the country, and it was only on that ground that he wished to defend the estimates laid on their lordships table.

The Earl of *Lauderdale* observed, that his noble friend deserved the thanks of parliament and of the country for calling their attention in this pointed manner to the necessity of watching the loans; for when these loans were resorted to in time of peace, unless a distinct pledge were given as to their amount and length of duration, nothing could be more ruinous than such a system. A committee of parliament ought to be appointed to examine the system thoroughly, to inquire into the necessities and means of the country, and to limit these loans, both as to extent and duration, otherwise the country could not yet be considered as safe from ruin. The paper had now risen, in comparison with gold, with a most extraordinary rapidity, which, however, he could very well account for: but till the standard of payments should be fixed, an undue proportion of paper would soon be thrown back again into circulation, and the most mischievous consequences would follow from these constant variations. But as to the property tax, he contended, that it would have injured public credit as much as a loan. It was in vain to think of completely restoring public credit without restoring the fixed standard of payments; and measures, and bold ones, must, in his opinion, be adopted for that purpose, unless they were willing to expose the country to the danger of absolute ruin. The burthen of taxation had been severely felt, but it had not been felt to the full extent at the moment of imposition; and it was for that reason that it had gone to so great an extent. The country was not safe, unless the most decisive measures were taken to ascertain its true state and condition, and to apply the proper remedies. A committee of parliament he conceived to be absolutely necessary for that purpose, that they might examine the means of the nation, and fix their establishments accordingly: for he maintained, that the proper mode of proceeding was, to calculate their means first, and then settle their establishments, instead of fixing their establishments first at a certain amount, and then considering about the means to support them. The necessities of war might justify the latter method: but the former was the only proper mode of proceeding in time of peace. He therefore most anxiously besought their lordships to adopt the measure of investigation by a parliamentary committee, that the state of the nation might be brought fairly before the public, that every man who chose might be aware of the real situation of the finances of the country. It could not be said that this measure was without precedent, as the

American war was hardly finished before it was adopted. In 1786, another such committee was appointed, and a report made, by which we now knew historically the financial state of that period as well as it was known at that time. In 1792 there was a revision of the establishments of the country, and a reduction of 50,000*l.* was recommended and adopted. He only asked ministers to follow the line chalked out for them by their predecessors; otherwise the present era would be one more pregnant with ruin than any period in the history of the country.

The Earl of *Egremont* presented a petition from the gentry, clergy, and freeholders of the county of York, against the property tax, praying for economy in every branch of the government. His lordship stated that the petition was not numerously signed, owing to the meeting having only been held last Friday, and it being considered of importance to have it sent off immediately to town. It was, however, one of the most respectable county meetings ever held in Yorkshire. There were from 6 to 8000 freeholders present, and the petition was nearly unanimously agreed to. He took the opportunity of expressing his satisfaction at the rejection of the income tax, and the abandonment of the war duty on malt. There was, however, full one third of the country in which barley was not grown, and to which, therefore, the abandonment of the war malt tax would be no relief whatever. He trusted, therefore, that some relief would be afforded to that part of the country, including some districts in Scotland and several in England, from that extreme agricultural distress which undoubtedly prevailed. With regard to a loan, if such a measure was absolutely necessary, he could not see why the interest, instead of being raised by new taxes, should not be charged upon that fund, which he was aware was set apart for other and important purposes; but the appropriation of which, in the manner he had just suggested, would be of more importance, with a view to the relief of the country, than would be the abstraction of it from those purposes to which it was at present applied.

Lord *Melville* presented a petition from some part of the county of Edinburgh, against the continuance of the property tax, and praying also for a general reduction of the expenses in the public service. The noble lord took that opportunity of remarking on what had fallen from a noble lord opposite as to the manner in which a certain commercial town had evaded the payment of the property tax. That noble lord had said that the town of Glasgow had paid as much in the house tax as to the property tax. So far from this being the case, it appeared that the town of Glasgow paid in house tax 10,000*l.* a-year, while the amount of the property tax, in the same time, was 82,300*l.*

Lord *Holland* observed, that he had mentioned the circumstance as a report which had reached him, not as a fact which came within his own knowledge. However, as the fact seemed to be otherwise, he was glad to learn that the inhabitants of Glasgow were relieved from a much greater sum than that which he had been informed they were obliged to pay.

The petitions were ordered to lie on the table.

EAST INDIA COMPANY'S ACCOUNTS.—SLAVE TRADE.] Lord *Grenville*, before he proceeded to the subject of the motion of which he had given notice, wished to call their lordships attention to the accounts of the company to which parliament had thought proper to intrust the administration of our dominions in India. Their lordships would recollect, that it appeared, on the renewal of the charter, that the commercial accounts of the company were so mixed with the accounts of their territorial revenue, that it was impossible to ascertain from these accounts the amount of their commercial profit or loss. This was a circumstance which had struck every one, and certain provisions were accordingly inserted in the act, in order to correct the practice. What he wished then to be informed of was, whether any and what regulations had been adopted for that purpose? He did not, however, call for an answer to that question now, but merely requested that this might be considered as a notice that he would move for papers to bring information on this subject before the House, on the first day on which any other particular business stood for discussion.

He should now, then, proceed to the subject of his present motion, and he hoped that all their lordships would agree with him that it was proper to have the documents which he should call for laid before them. Their lordships had done much by the act abolishing the trade in slaves by importation into the colonies from Africa, and by this means had laid the foundation of all further measures on that subject. His object now was, to bring before the House such information as could be procured, relative to the effect of this measure on the commercial interests of the West Indies, and on the condition of that unhappy race of beings for whose benefit it was chiefly designed. It was highly desirable that their lordships should learn whether the predictions of those who augured only evil from the measure had been verified, — whether the more sanguine hopes of those who had viewed the matter in a very different light had not been fulfilled,—and whether the most important benefits had not resulted from it, not only to the cause of humanity, but even to the agricultural and commercial interests of the West Indies.

Perhaps their lordships might think, that when parliament was overwhelmed with other business of the highest consequence, it was not expedient to be calling for papers merely to gratify curiosity: but his motion was also intended for a practical purpose. Their lordships had indeed done great good by preventing importations of slaves from Africa, but they had not done the whole of their duty. He did not wish at present to raise any question on the subject of legislative interference with the internal concerns of the colonies; but as to the abstract right of the British parliament to interfere, he considered it as perfectly clear on every ground both of principle and of practice, ever since the colonies had been settled. The only qualification of this right was in the raising of the colonial revenue: but even that right of exemption from the control of the British parliament rested on an act of that parliament, which therefore might, like any other act, be repealed by the authority by which it had been passed. But while he asserted that right in its broadest extent, no one could be more anxious to avoid all undue and vexatious or captious interference in practice: no one could be more disposed to continue to the colonies every advantage which by custom and usage they enjoyed. Their lordships could not but feel that there was, in the circumstances of our colonial policy, one subject on which the House had already declared itself—one subject on which it heard the concurrent voice of humanity and justice—one subject on which it had received the congratulations of the country and of all good men—the amelioration of the condition of slavery by the abolition of the slave trade. We had in our West India islands more than half a million of persons placed in a situation in which no British subject was placed—in a situation where their happiness lay at the disposal of others, to an extent not experienced by the subjects of any other state—to an extent not felt by the lowest class in this country—but placed there by the permission of our laws, and under the sanction of the legislature. Though their condition was such as called loudly for relief, and appealed to the interference of humanity, it was so complicated with such circumstances, that the intended relief and interference, if not wisely administered, might not only endanger the lives and properties of those who held them in bondage, but the existence and safety of these unfortunate beings themselves.

Expressing, therefore, a hope and desire that, as society improved, their condition might be gradually ameliorated —that they might gradually rise into a state of greater consideration, and arrive at the enjoyment of those rights and liberties which were enjoyed by the least favoured classes—those classes that partook of the smallest portion of freedom—we should consider what could be done to secure their protection, and to accelerate their improvement. We owed it to our own character, to our own consistency, to take care of the interests of a people whom we had already manifested such a desire of protecting, and for the bettering of whose condition the legislature of this country had proceeded so far. There should, however, be no precipitation in the enactments to be made: he wished the House to view the subject with a full sense of its difficulty and importance. If it was true that protection ought to be extended to the black population of our colonies—if it was merciful to endeavour an amelioration of their state, it should be considered how our humanity could be most effectually exercised, and how we could guard against evil while we attempted to do good. He had no hesitation in saying, that the first step in this great work was the prevention of any accession to the numbers already in slavery by fresh importation; or, in other words, the complete execution of the abolition act. He always looked to regulation as the consequence of abolition, and not to abolition as the consequence of regulation. The British parliament had lent its sanction to the great and glorious measure of complete abolition of the trade—it now behoved it to enact such regulations, or to enforce those already enacted, in such a manner as would render any further exercise of it impossible. The first object of the abolitionists was, to cut off the chance of fresh supply—to guard against any new sacrifice of human liberty—to prevent the accumulation of misery, and, by those means, to raise the value and to ameliorate the condition of those who had previously been imported as slaves, or reduced to that degrading condition in our colonies.

The noble baron here expressed his satisfaction at the extent to which the hopes of the abolitionists were already accomplished, or in a progressive state of accomplishment. He was happy to have the testimony in favour of the results of the abolition—not of the friends of the measure, not of those who advanced it with all their endeavours, not of those who looked forward to its attainment as the object of their wishes and exertions, but of those who at first opposed it, or who looked upon its accomplishment as a very equivocal advantage, and who had only surrendered their opinions to the evidence of facts and experience. He was happy, in short, to have the testimony of its enemies in favour of the great good it had produced. Its effects in ameliorating the condition of the existing slaves, in producing a gradual improvement in the relations of the two kinds of population, and conducing to the permanent security and tranquillity of our colonial possessions, had nearly fulfilled the anticipations and predictions of its advocates, and agreeably disappointed the fears of its opponents. Thus encouraged by the success of our former labours in the cause of humanity, we might proceed with greater courage to the performance of that part of our duty which still remained, and rely with greater confidence on the final attainment of our object. He felt convinced that such would be the glorious fruits of this one great political act of the abolition, if carried into complete effect by auxiliary regulations,—that it would not only limit the mass of slavery, and prevent the accession of misery, but would ultimately remedy the evils which a contrary system had engendered, and terminate in the great change which the friends of liberty and humanity anticipated. Our first object, while we entertained these hopes, should be to provide such measures as would ascertain to demonstration the results of the abolition, and show whether it had produced the effects anticipated, by increasing the numbers as well as improving the condition of the black population. If there was such an increase as was predicted, and that increase was proved to result from the operation of the real principle of the law, and not from its evasion, then it would be gratifying to the feelings of those who were friendly to it, and mankind would perceive the benefits of wise legislative interference. If, on the other hand, there had been any check on this increase, and if the hopes of the abolitionists were to be disappointed, it would be still more important to know to what that disappointment was owing—whether it proceeded from the evasion of the law—or, if the law was not evaded, whether there were not peculiar circumstances connected with its operation that prevented it from producing all the good to which its tendency was directed. If the law was, as he hoped it would be, enforced with proper effect, and with the desire of producing the greatest good, its execution should be watched in every place, in every establishment, in the smallest as well as the largest; the government, the House, and the country resting convinced that the measure could only be useful when universally executed. If there was in the whole of our colonies one point neglected—if there was one inlet to fresh supplies unguarded—if the law of the abolition was in the slightest degree evaded, no advantage could result from its operation. All the evils of slavery would be again felt—fresh importation, fresh sufferings, fresh horrors, fresh mortality, would be again experienced.

The abolition act, he thought, might be made completely effective, and the recurrence of all these evils prevented by a bill, which he would introduce, for the registration of slaves in our colonies. Such a register would not only show the increase or the decrease of the black population in their numbers, but would ascertain such facts as numbers alone could not furnish. Supposing an increase, it was evident that the simple fact might be explained in two ways,—either from fresh importation by an evasion of the law, or from native procreation. The register would ascertain which of these was the case. If a doubt existed of the evasion of the law, the register would show when it took place, and the owner of the person unjustly reduced to slavery would be prevented from reaping the fruits of his injustice and breach of duty. An objection might be suggested to such a measure, that it would be equivalent to a penal statute. He could not understand the application of a penal law to whole communities. Such a law as he proposed would not be a penal, but only a preventive law: its object was to prevent crimes, not to punish them; it did not require a proof of their commission to justify its enactment, but a probability that they would be committed. The noble baron begged the House to remember, that when the measure of the abolition was before their lordships, it was alleged against its passing, that it would be totally ineffective; that no law could prevent the importation of slaves clandestinely, if the open trade were prohibited; and that all the power of government could not prevent smuggling after the lawful traffic was ended. Such reasonings and avowals were sufficient to excite the jealousy of the friends to the abolition, and to induce them to secure its execution by every auxiliary enactment, like the present, which they should think requisite. It would be to shut our eyes to what was happening or had happened—to what had taken place or would take place—not to adopt provisions similar to those implied in the measure of registration. He rested its necessity on the impossibility of any other precaution producing the wished-for effect. In the great archipelago of islands where our possessions lay, it would be practicable, under any system of vigilance and precaution, to import slaves from one island to another. Now the peace was established, the facilities of smuggling would be incalculably increased. During the war the danger of clandestine importation was greater than now, because there were more of the islands under our dominion (and he was of opinion that we had still too many), and consequently a greater extent of the European colonies subject to our laws. Although we might prevent importation from Africa, we could not so easily shut our possessions against a fresh supply from the colonies of our neighbours in the same archipelago. Secondly, during war our vessels exercised a right of search which they would not now be justified in claiming. If a ship were proceeding to the colony of any friendly power, we had now no right to stop it, though in a short time its cargo might be landed on our own plantations. There were two powers in Europe that had not given any pledge of a desire to discontinue this nefarious traffic, and there were free ports in the West Indies for discharging their cargoes. He would not trouble the House at any greater length on the subject, although, by referring to our lately acquired possessions on the coast of South America, there might be additional arguments found for the measure he was recommending. The next point to be adverted to, was the source whence the necessary regulation should originate. It should emanate from the British parliament, and should not be left to the discretion of the local legislatures. The British parliament would proceed to the consideration of what was just and expedient, disregarding prejudice, and observing a dignified moderation. If the object could have been attained without our interference, he was willing to allow that our interference should not have been pressed. The legislative authorities for the whole empire should only offer to originate measures, when it was proved that by no other mode they could be enacted. For the purpose of putting the House in possession of the information requisite to the discussion and due consideration of the bill which he proposed to introduce, he would now move, " That an humble address be presented to the Prince Regent, praying for copies of all reports from the governors of colonies in the West Indies, since the year 1807, respecting the manner in which the act for the abolition of the slave trade had been carried into execution in those colonies, and the effect which that abolition had had on the condition of the slaves; and also for copies of all laws which had been passed in the legislative assemblies of the several colonies, for the purpose of better carrying this law into effect."

Lord *Holland* thought it necessary to say a few words on this subject, and to state why he gave his most cordial concurrence to the motion of his noble friend, which if carried into execution, would, in his opinion, be productive of very good effect: One of the motives which urged him to approve of this motion was, that it would shew what improvement had been made in the condition of the slaves since the abolition act. But at the same time that he supported the motion, on account of the inquiry which the production of these papers would enable their lordships to make, he did not by any means pledge himself to the support of the bill intended to be founded on these papers. He approved of the registration of slaves, and he had recommended to those who were concerned to pass and enforce it, but he had some doubts as to the expediency of it on our part. We should be cautious how we entered into a system of polemical legislation for our colonies. As far as the papers moved for by his noble friend could give information on the state of the several colonies, he gave the motion his sincere concurrence, but at the same time he did not desire this information with a view to inquire, whether any benefit had been conferred on the slaves by the abolition act. That was a fact which, in his opinion, could not be denied. Allowing that the abolition act had not been altogether able to prevent, in some of the colonies, the clandestine importation of slaves, he would still say it was a gross exaggeration to state that the abolition act had not produced a great part of the effects anticipated from that law, and that the condition of the slaves had not been materially bettered. Though he should vote for the motion of his noble friend, in order that the House might have the fullest information respecting the condition of slaves in the West Indies, he had no hesitation in saying, that of the wisdom of a bill for the registration of slaves passing the British parliament, he entertained very considerable doubts.

The motion was agreed to.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, March 22.

Agricultural Distress.] Several petitions were presented complaining of the reduced prices of agricultural produce, and praying for relief.

Mr. *Jones* was aware how ungracious the attempt was to press upon his majesty's ministers any question connected with the reduction of the national burthens, after what had lately passed in parliament. He still could not refrain from pointing out one tax which greatly affected the agricultural interest, from the inequality of its operation—he meant the agricultural horse tax, which bore on the poor cultivator of arable land, but not on the farmer of pasture soil, nor indeed on the tithe owner. This he conceived a grievance, which could be remedied without a reduction of the general produce of the tax. To effect this amelioration, there were two ways. One was, the exemption of certain farms—suppose the exemption of farms under 150*l.* a-year—from the operation of the tax; or else let it fall on such occupiers in a diminished ratio. Another remedy would be, that all pasture land should be taxed in its proportion, whether horses were worked or not. Again, he thought some improvement might be made in the road acts, which imposed a local taxation, to keep the mail coach roads in order: it would perhaps be politic to exempt from the tax, according to the present system, such districts as were liable to this expense, or else to get rid of the road tax altogether. The hon. member hoped that a general reduction of public expenditure would accompany the present system. The splendour of the throne could be properly maintained in a country like this, without any countenance being given to the introduction of foreign frivolities. He would take this opportunity of lamenting that the boon which the chancellor of the exchequer intended to bestow upon the agricultural interest of England, was not extended to the principality of Wales—a part of the empire which ought to have been indulged with a participation in the minister's plan. The tenants in Scotland only paid a land-tax of two-pence in the pound, while those of England and Wales paid four-pence; this obvious inequality of burthen was attempted to be defended on the principle, that though the Scotch tenantry paid neither tithes nor poor-rates, their rent was raised in proportion. But this, he believed, was not the fact, and he hoped the Welsh representatives would adopt the example set by other gentlemen in that House, and assert the interest of their constituents. When Mr. Burke, on a memorable occassion, flung down a dagger in that House, to illustrate the enthusiasm of his hostility to French principles, he created an extraordinary feeling. When lord Lisburne produced the wooden shoes worn by the Scotch peasantry, and the miserable sheafs of corn which their soil produced, he effected a mitigation of the land-tax then in progress towards them. Now, if he (Mr. Jones) had prepared himself with the materials, he could have equally exhibited to the House demonstrative proofs that the Welsh peasant had his wooden shoes and impoverished grain to plead for his exemption. The people of Wales had also a claim, as having borne their share, at least, of the public pressure—their peasantry had contributed to the military strength of the empire, and at a critical moment had rushed forth to defend themselves from foreign invasion.

ORDNANCE ESTIMATES.] Mr. *R. Ward* begged leave to withdraw the consideration of the Ordnance Estimates for another week, with a view to make some reductions in the civil department of that branch of the public service.

Mr. *Calcraft* expressed his satisfaction, that the ordnance estimates were withdrawn with a view to their reduction. He was glad to find that government had had the benefit of the voice of that House and the country, before they came to an ultimate decision upon their measures. He hoped, however, that when the estimates were brought again before the House, the reduction in them would not be confined to the civil departments, but extended to the other parts of that division of the public expenditure; not only in its details, but in some of the higher items of the accounts.

Mr. *R. Ward* here intimated, in point of order, that this was not the moment to call for explanation.

Mr. *Ponsonby* did not mean to enter upon any debate, or indeed to provoke a discussion at the present moment, contrary to the usage of the House; he merely rose to express his great satisfaction at the communication that had just been made, because it seemed to emanate from a true consideration of the tone maintained by that House and the country.

Mr. *R. Ward* rose to order, and stated that he would not submit to insinuations of this kind; he had merely withdrawn the notice of a motion which stood for that night, and he appealed to the chair, whether, under such circumstances, a premature debate ought to be allowed.

The *Speaker* said, that, having been appealed to, it became necessary for him to state, that a conversation on the withdrawal of a notice of this kind was irregular, inasmuch as it tended to promote an informal debate.

IRISH WAR DUTY ON MALT.] Mr. *Vesey Fitzgerald* said, he wished to relieve any anxiety which might be felt on the subject of the Malt Duties in Ireland, and stated his intention to extend the same relief to the agricultural interests of that country which had been given to Great Britain by the repeal of the war duty. The duty would then stand at the same rate as the English, and an allowance would be made to the malsters for stock on hand. He had already given assurances to that effect to the maltsters of Waterford; and it was in fact only equitable, that the allowance should be made. The distillers would be entitled also to a proportionate repayment.

Sir *John Newport* asked, whether any other allowances would be made?

Mr. *Fitzgerald* said, that the brewers in Ireland being subject to no direct tax, it would be difficult, and indeed impossible, to take the account of their stock. Nor was it reasonable; they had no claim, as when the duties had been raised no charge had been laid on the stock in their hands.

Sir *John Newport* expressed himself satisfied.

ARMY ESTIMATES.] Lord *Palmerston* rose to move the postponement of the farther consideration of the remaining Army Estimates. Meanwhile, he should lay a written paper on the table, which might be printed by Monday, showing the number and extent of the reductions intended to be made, as it might be more convenient for gentlemen to have this account in their hands, than to wait for it.

Mr. *Tierney* wished the noble lord would state, whether what he had to propose were new reductions, or merely the reductions that had already been explained to the House.

Lord *Palmerston* said, he hoped there would be some new reductions. The estimates had been drawn up in January last, and since that time some further reductions had been made. These he should state, specifying the date at which they had taken place.

Mr. *Tierney* hoped also, that the House would have some opportunity of reconsidering the number of men which had been voted. As he could hardly expect that the ministers of their own accord would perform such a service to the country, he hoped some member on that side of the House would make a motion on the subject, because the only reductions which could be of any real value were in the military establishments. By a strict revision of these estimates, much might be done towards the reduction of the taxation. As the ministers had been compelled to change their opinions on so many subjects, there were some hopes the country might be successful in this most important point.

Lord *Palmerston* said, he had stated that there had been a great reduction in the staff. He should be able to state a still further reduction, which he had not been able to state on the former occasion.

Lord *Nugent* wished to know, whether there was on the table any account of the number of soldiers discharged since the peace? An account had been presented of the number of second battalions reduced, but many of the men who composed them had been transferred to the first battalions. The account which he described was not, he believed, before the House.

Mr. *Ponsonby* rose to observe, that he had been lately rather prematurely called to order by an hon. gentleman opposite, as if his intention had been to record a dissent from the then proceeding of the hon. gentleman, while, in fact, his intention was to express a most sincere satisfaction that ministers had, at length, taken the sense of the House and the country upon some of their measures, and had shown symptoms of abiding by the wise result of their appeal. He wished that the questions relative to the peace establishments should rest with his majesty's government rather than be in the hands of others, because their official information gave them a better opportunity of forming a correct judgment on the details. He repeated the expression of his satisfaction, that government seemed, at length, to pay a proper obedience to the feelings of the country.

Mr. *Calcraft* wished to know whether the whole of the estimates would be again brought under the consideration of the House, or merely the two items which had not been voted.

Lord *Palmerston* answered, that only the two remaining items would be brought before the House.

Mr. *Bennet* wished to know, whether any regulation had been made to put a stop to the enlisting of boys?

Lord *Palmerston* said, that a regulation had been made, by which no one was enlisted under five feet four inches.

Mr. *Bennet* said, he had heard that this regulation did not extend to the soldiers enlisted for India.

Lord *Palmerston* said, the reason of this was, that some time elapsed between enlisting the soldiers and sending them out to India, and they were some months on their passage; so that in all it was fourteen months before they reached that country. Allowance was made for this time in determining the age of the persons enlisted.

NAVY ESTIMATES.] Mr. *Methuen* inquired from the hon. baronet opposite, whether the Navy Estimates were to be introduced for discussion on Monday next.

Sir *George Warrender* was unprepared with any reason why they should not be introduced at that time.

Mr. *Tierney*. But will they positively be then introduced?

Sir *G. Warrender* replied, that only one notice stood for Monday, and unless the gentlemen opposite protracted the discussion upon that, he saw no reason why the navy estimates should not then be considered.

Mr. *Fremantle*, observing that it was intended to make some reduction in the army estimates, especially under the head of guards and garrisons, and also in the ordnance estimates, expressed a wish to know whether it was proposed to make any farther reduction of the naval expenditure than appeared in the estimates on the table, or whether it was in contemplation to alter those estimates in any respect, he meant particularly with regard to the civil offices of the navy, and whether such alteration, if any, would be proposed on Monday next?

Sir *G. Warrender* stated, that it was undoubtedly intended to make every practicable reduction in the expenditure of the naval department, but the reduction desired could not be consistently made at once. For it was to be recollected, that the House had already voted 33,000 men for the service of the navy, and therefore we were not yet arrived at the peace establishment. He had, however, to state with respect to the civil department of the navy, that he did not intend to move that the salaries of the two secretaries of the admiralty should be voted upon the war establishment [Hear, hear!]. At the same time, he could not say that any other reduction was at present intended in the naval department. But he had the satisfaction to calculate that considerable reduction would take place in this department probably towards the close of the current year, although it was not thought proper to make any farther alteration in the estimates.

Mr. *R. Gordon* asked, whether it was intended to make any reduction of expense in the office of the paymaster of marines?

Sir *G. Warrender* replied, that it was proposed to continue the office alluded to on its present establishment.

Mr. *Methuen* congratulated the House upon the satisfaction which must be felt not only by the House itself, but by the country at large, at the intelligence which had been just communicated by the hon. baronet respecting the salaries of the two secretaries.

SILVER COINAGE.] Mr. *Grenfell* wished to know whether any arrangement had been made on a subject of very great importance, he meant for the establishment of a better Circulation of Silver? In the last session, the chancellor of the exchequer had stated, that it was in contemplation to issue bank tokens of a smaller denomination than 18*d.* but he had heard nothing more on that subject. It was well known that there was nothing like a tower shilling in the country, but that the circulation was made up of Birmingham counterfeits, which swelled the criminal calendar; or by old 12 and 24 sous pieces imported from France. When the temptation to import these pieces, which in France passed only for 10 and 20 sous, was so great (the profit being 20 per cent.) it would be perceived that the introduction of them was not less mischievous than the counterfeit coining. It was stated by the late lord Liverpool that the price of silver was never so high but that the country might have a good coinage; but now the price of silver was not much above the mint price. He thought, therefore, a new coinage might take place without danger, but if not, at least some temporary measure should be adopted to remedy the evil.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, the proper time for a general renovation of the standard silver currency, would be when the gold currency was also restored. The present was not the time for such a measure, but he agreed that some temporary remedy should be applied to the evil complained of, which he admitted was great.

Mr. *Lockhart* suggested the propriety of some regulation for the safe conveyance of the paper currency. Robberies of bank-notes had taken place to a great extent, and the mischief had been increased, as he understood, by a composition with the felons for the purpose of recovering the property.

Mr. *Frankland Lewis* expressed a hope that no temporary remedy would be applied to the evils flowing from the debased state of our circulation, but that the country would be brought back to that wholesole system under which paper was at all times exchangeable for some legal coin in the precious metals, either the old standard guinea, or some new standard. The old standard could not be established without injustice to those who had borrowed money in a depreciated currency, neither indeed could any new standard be adopted with perfect justice to all parties. Yet the sooner the present system was put an end to the better; for the evil would go on increasing if we continued to live under it, flattering ourselves with the hope of an event which would never come to pass.

CONVICTS UNDER SENTENCE.] Mr. *Bennet* asked, whether a council would soon be convened to take into consideration the Recorder's Report, with respect to the fate of the several convicts in Newgate under sentence?

Lord *Castlereagh* replied, that he had the satisfaction to state, that it was expected the Prince Regent would be able to come to town within a few days, and that the case alluded to by the hon. gentleman would be immediately taken into consideration. At the same time he thought it necessary to mention, that no application whatever had been made to the Regent by, or on behalf of, any individual, whose suspense was complained of, and that his royal highness had had no personal knowledge of the case [Hear, hear!], until apprized of what had taken place in that House. It was also proper to observe, that as it was the province of the recorder to report all the cases of conviction which took place in London and Middlesex, whether tried by himself or by any other judge, a considerable time usually elapsed before such report could be made, because it became necessary for that magistrate to collect and examine the evidence on each case, as well as to inquire into the character of the prisoners. Therefore the allegation of any unusual delay could only apply to the sessions before the last, and this delay was attributable solely to the melancholy indisposition of the Regent. It was doubted by the magistrate to whom he had already alluded, whether any execution could be ordered in London or Middlesex, in which the court usually resided, without the express sanction of the sovereign, or that of the person exercising the powers of sovereignty; and in consequence of this difficulty, the case of the prisoners alluded to, necessarily stood over—the malady of the Regent, which consisted of several severe attacks of the gout, rendering his royal highness unable to come to town, while ministers were frequently encouraged to hope for the removal of the disease, and that his royal highness would be enabled to attend to the exercise of his functions in London. The noble lord repeated that the first intimation which the Regent received of the case referred to, was from the mention of it in that House, and that the delay complained of arose out of the doubts entertained by his royal highness's servants, as to what course ought to be pursued under such circumstances. These doubts would, however, soon be removed, as his royal highness's return to town was expected within a few days, and upon that event the case alluded to would be immediately taken into consideration.

Mr. *Abercrombie* said, he felt that upon this, as upon all other cases connected with the administration of the government, the ministers of the Crown were alone to be deemed responsible. But this was not the first time the difficulty alluded to was known to exist, and therefore some measures ought to be taken to decide the question. There was undoubtedly, according to immemorial custom, a difference in the case between Middlesex and the other counties. But it was held that no execution could legally take place in any county in which the sovereign resided, without being brought under the consideration of his majesty. Hence it would be recollected, that when the King was some years since at Weymouth, it was doubted whether any execution could take place, without his majesty's express sanction; and upon the same ground it might be doubted, whether while the Regent resided at Brighton any execution could take place in the county of Sussex without being submitted to the consideration of his Royal Highness. Under these circumstances, he thought it would become ministers to have such a difficulty taken into consideration, and some provision made to decide the question.

Mr. *M. A. Taylor* deplored the unfortunate delay to which the conversation referred. For the suspence complained of, with respect to those prisoners, must be a source of uneasiness to every man of consideration. But it was his intention to have offered himself to the notice of the House, if it were not for the explanation of his noble friend, for he was persuaded that no man of feeling could be more disturbed by the infliction of pain than the illustrious person at present exercising the functions of sovereignty. He could, indeed, assure the House, that this illustrious person felt a peculiar repugnance to that part of his duty which referred to the sanction of any execution. That in truth his Royal Highness never sanctioned such a sentence without the most poignant regret [Hear, hear!]. But as to the difficulty which related to the case under consideration, he agreed with his learned friend who had just sat down, that it ought to be investigated, with a view to prevent its recurrence. For no one could answer for the state of his health, and therefore the health of no individual should be allowed to interfere with the necessary administration of public justice. The hon. gentleman concluded with expressing his satisfaction to find, that although in this as in all other acts of the government, the ministers alone were responsible, the Regent was not aware of or at all implicated in the case immediately referred to.

Mr. *Brougham* declared, that he felt peculiarly satisfied by the explanation of the noble lord. For although he was always ready to admit the responsibility of ministers for every act or omission of the government, he would yet express his satisfaction that, in this instance blame was attributable to them alone. That ministers alone were responsible for the conduct of the government was his constitutional opinion—this he said upon reflection and advisedly [Hear, hear!]. But yet in making this statement he felt it necessary to observe, that this wholesome constitutional principle was first departed from by the other side of the House. For instance, the noble lord opposite (Castlereagh) had taken occasion, in more instances than one, to introduce into the debates of that House the personal merits of the Prince exercising the powers of sovereignty, for the purpose of panegyrizing his Royal Highness, to whom alone, according to the noble lord's allegation, any merit due to the conduct of government was exclusively attributable. Again, a learned serjeant (Best) on the other side, thought proper, last session, to give notice of a distinct motion for an address of thanks to his royal highness the Prince Regent for the execution of his official duties. Thus members on the other side of the House departed from the usual constitutional practice by fixing the attention of parliament, not upon the conduct of ministers, but upon the personal administration of the Prince. Yet those gentlemen affected to feel offended at any allusion to that personal administration which was not quite in accordance with the strain of praise which they thought it expedient to employ when using language inconsistent with the spirit of the constitution and the practice of parliament.

Lord *Castlereagh* said, he was extremely glad, from what he had just heard, that parliament was not likely again to be placed in painful situations. He was happy to think the House was not again to be pained as it had been the other night. He declared that he took blame to himself for not calling that hon. and learned gentleman to order, when on a former night he thought proper to employ the most abominable and unjustifiable language [Hear, hear!]. It was undoubtedly true that ministers were constitutionally responsible for any faults in the conduct of the government, but it was no less true that the sovereign alone was constitutionally entitled to the praise of any merit which belonged to that conduct. If, therefore, the hon. and learned gentleman intended what he had just said as an *amende honorable*, he could not but think that he had read his recantation by halves.

Mr. *Brougham* said, that so far from making any recantation, he was ready to repeat the words alluded to, if their repetition would afford the noble lord any satisfaction. So far from being disposed to recant, he was prepared to maintain, as he had already stated, that the language used by the noble lord and others, afforded the fullest justification for his conduct.

Mr. *Bathurst* expressed his decided disapprobation of the conduct of the hon. and learned gentleman, and was proceeding to animadvert upon the language of that hon. and learned gentleman on a former evening, when he was called to order by

Mr. *Tierney*, who contended that it was irregular to refer to words spoken in a former debate, and that his hon. and learned friend had made no recantation. But he deprecated the reference the more, as the right hon. gentleman was animadverting upon expressions used in the heat of discussion, in a strain rather more likely to exasperate than to allay animosity.

The *Attorney General* rose to order, conceiving it irregular in any member to indulge in comments when he called another member to order.

Mr. *Methuen* appealed to the chair to decide the question of order [A loud cry of Chair, chair!].

The *Speaker* said, that when thus applied to on all sides of the House, as to the point of order, he had no hesitation in stating that this conversation ought to go no farther.

EXTENTS IN AID.] Mr. *William Smith* moved, "That there be laid before this House, an account of the number of Extents in Chief against all debtors of the Crown, except such as shall appear to have been only parochial collectors of the King's taxes, which have been issued from the exchequer in each year, from the 1st of January 1801 to the 31st of December 1812, inclusive, and of the number of extents in aid issued in each year during the same period." He also moved for an account of all extents in aid issued each year since 1812, specifying against whom each extent was issued, the amount for which it was issued, and the branch of revenue or other source on which it became due; also those that were issued at the instance of the parties themselves.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that such an account would very unnecessarily bring before the House and the public the names and circumstances of those unfortunate individuals, against whom those extents had been issued. There were also many instances in which extents were issued for Crown debts, and never proceeded on. He would have no objection to the motion if it was so framed as not to expose the names and circumstances of individuals.

Mr. *W. Smith* said, that he was anxious to obtain certain information, without giving much trouble; but this he could not effect, unless the names of the parties were communicated. He wished to know the number of extents issued, and particularly those which were issued at the instance of the parties themselves. If any means could be devised for acquiring this without producing the names, he would readily accede to it.

After a few words from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the motion was withdrawn.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Monday, March 25.

STATE OF IRELAND.] The Marquis of *Buckingham* adverted to the notice given for him in his absence through indisposition, by a noble friend, of a motion for Friday respecting the State of Ireland, and observed, that understanding it would be more convenient to noble lords to have the discussion to-morrow se'nnight, he was desirous of postponing it to that day, and therefore gave notice of his intention then to move that the House should resolve itself into a committee on the state of Ireland.—On the noble marquis's motion the lords were ordered to be summoned for that day.

PUBLIC EXPENDITURE.] The Earl of *Darnley* observed, that nothing could be more important at the present period than to watch carefully over the Public Expenditure, in order to limit it to what was absolutely necessary. He most sincerely congratulated their lordships and the country on the decision with respect to the property tax, both on account of the relief which it afforded, and likewise on account of the confidence in parliament which it would preserve in the country—a confidence without which the public affairs could never be properly conducted. But then it became only the more necessary, on account of that decision, to pay the utmost attention to economy and retrenchment: and, in order that their lordships might be aware of those particulars in which retrenchment was called for, it would be highly proper to bring under their view those cases in which there had been a useless waste of the public money. Upon that ground, he wished now to give notice, that he would at some future period move for an account of the money expended on certain works which were carried on in the county where he resided, and in others, such as the military canal works, which were of little or no advantage to the public, and yet produced a very considerable expenditure of public money. He intended to move for an account of the sums so expended since the commencement of the last war, and would give previous notice of the time when he should move for it.

The Earl of *Mulgrave* had no objection personally to the production of these accounts, but could not see the practical utility of such a motion, unless the noble lord intended to revise the former votes of parliament by which this measure had been sanctioned. For what took place, however, before he came into office he was not responsible, and with regard to himself he had no objection to the accounts being produced.

The Earl of *Darnley* said, he had no intention of revising the former votes of parliament, nor of interfering with the responsibility of ministers, his only object was to show that an expense had been incurred about an object which was now useless, and that therefore all further expenditure for the same purpose ought to be saved.

QUAKERS' PETITION AGAINST THE PROPERTY TAX.] The Marquis of *Lansdowne* presented a Petition from a number of the society called Quakers against the property tax. He wished to call their lordships attention to it, as the address was rather unusual. It was addressed to the Upper House of Parliament, which was one denomination of their lordships' House. It was for their lordships' to say whether they would receive it. But he was instructed to state, that the only reason why the petitioners were unwilling to address it to the Lords spiritual and temporal was, that they conceived that this was a mode of address which ought to be used only to the Supreme Being.

The *Lord Chancellor* said, the Upper House of Parliament was a denomination of that House, and given to it in their own standing orders, but that no petition so addressed had ever before been received.

Earl *Stanhope* said, that this was a matter as clear as the sun at noon-day. The Upper House of Parliament was one proper denomination of that House; and why should they refuse to receive a petition so addressed, especially as the refusal would deprive that valuable body of persons called Quakers of the privilege of petitioning their lordships' House, which was enjoyed by the rest of the community? In their own standing orders, the House of Commons was called the Lower House, and the House of Lords the Upper House of Parliament. Did they mean the walls of the houses or the members? In one of their orders it was said, that the Lower House was to stand at their bar uncovered. Did they mean that the walls were to come to their bar and stand uncovered? Another order provided for holding conferences with the Lower House in the painted chamber. Did they mean that the walls of the House of Commons must come and talk to them in the painted chamber? Another order spoke of the door-keepers coming in while the House was sitting. Did they mean while the walls were sitting, or the members? It was clear, then, that by the Upper House were meant the members, and that this was a proper address.

The *Lord Chancellor* said, that in these instances there could be no doubt that the Lords spiritual and temporal were meant: but if any one were to ask these petitioners whether they meant the Lords spiritual and temporal, the answer would be, that they meant no such thing. There was no wish to prevent these persons from petitioning, but they ought to treat their lordships with the usual respect.

The House then divided on the questions whether the petition should be received:—Not-Contents, 36: Contents, 9—Majority against receiving the petition, 27.

STATUTE BOOK.] Earl *Stanhope* adverted to the state of the Statute Book, observing, that in no country in the world was there a statute book in which there were so many defects, and which was so voluminous or so confused. Of this state of our statute book every justice of the peace, every one concerned in the administration of justice, or in the collection of taxes must be aware. Hence great evils arose; in order to do away which, he had a remedy to propose, and gave notice that on Friday se'nnight he should bring forward a motion upon the subject.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, March 25.

PROPERTY TAX.] Sir *Robert Heron* said, that seeing the secretary of the treasury in his place, he thought proper to put to him a question which he had no doubt the hon. gentleman would be able to answer to the satisfaction of the House and the country; namely, whether as the property tax was to be discontinued, it was meant to get rid of all the odious machinery of that odious tax, and especially of the nine or ten inspectors of taxes, by whom the people were afflicted under the pressure of that tax.

Mr. *Lushington* was not perfectly prepared to give an answer to the question, but since the property tax was not to be renewed, he was sure it was not the intention of ministers to keep up unnecessarily any part of its machinery.

CORONERS BILL.] On the motion of Mr. H. Sumner, the above bill was read a second time. On the motion, "That this bill be committed,"

Mr. *Shaw Lefevre* rose, and expressed his intention of opposing the measure. At the present period, when the greatest distress prevailed all over the country, the House ought to be very careful how they imposed additional burthens on the people, by whom the coroners' salaries were paid. It did not appear, from the late contest for the situation of coroner of the county of Middlesex, that there was any want of proper persons to fill the office, even at the present salary. He believed that more respectable persons did not exist than those who sought for this situation. They were chiefly attorneys, men of eminence in their profession; and so they ought to be; for, in many cases, great attention was necessary in the investigation of matters that came before the jury, and the coroner ought to be competent to direct them on those points. One of the great objects of those who aimed at the situation of coroner was, to get that fame and notoriety in the country, which were so necessary for men practising the law. The hon. gentleman then observed, that the office of coroner was one of very great importance. The coroner represented the king, and should, he conceived, be paid in some other manner, than out of the country rates. In conclusion, he moved, "That the bill be committed this day six months."

The *Speaker* reminded the hon. gentleman that the question before the House was, "That this bill be committed," which must be met by a direct negative, and not by an amendment, as to the time when that proceeding should take place.

Mr. *Swan* differed very much from the hon. gentleman opposite. Although a contest of considerable magnitude had lately taken place in the county of Middlesex, for the situation of coroner, it should be recollected that a very great difference existed between the emoluments of the coroner for Middlesex, and those derived by individuals in remote counties. The coroner for Middlesex had not any great distance to travel, and the inquests were so numerous, that attending to them was almost sufficient to occupy all his time. In the remote counties, however, the situation of coroner was not filled by persons of sufficient respectability. He knew instances where apothecaries and schoolmasters served as coroners, and the consequence was, that sufficient attention was not paid to the duties of the office. The coroner was under the necessity of attending the assizes; and thus very often when that officer lived thirty or forty miles from the county town, he was obliged to appear there, his expenses being paid by himself, and no remuneration whatever granted to him. In consequence of the office being thus undervalued, he had heard of instances where paupers, and others who had no friends or relations to look minutely into the causes of their death, had something like a coroner's inquest held on them, which was conducted rather as a mere matter of course, than as an inquiry set on foot for a grave and important purpose. By granting to the coroner a proper remuneration, such occurrences would be avoided; since they would be sure of having respectable candidates for the office.

Mr. *Holme Sumner* said, the remuneration at present given to the coroner was by no means adequate The office was one that required the abilities of persons of education, and certainly no man of liberal education would undertake to fill it for the paltry emolument of 20*s*. for each inquest, having, perhaps, to ride 20 or 30 miles to the place where it was to be held. Besides, the coroner often lost much time, for which he did not receive any additional recompense. Thus, when he came to the appointed place, he might find the constable negligent in his duty, and the jury, in consequence, not summoned. By this means, a delay of two or three days might arise, and for this he received no more than 20*s*. Sixty-five years ago, the coroner was allowed 9*d*. per mile for travelling; at that time posting was about 6*d*. or 7*d*. a mile. They received no more now, when posting was so much increased in price. An hon. gentleman observed, that the coroner was the representative of the king, and yet, when he refused to increase his remuneration he seemed to say, that he ought not to be suffered to travel in a post-chaise. But, surely, if, in the exercise of his functions, he represented the monarch, the least mark of respect that could be shown to him was the affording him the means of making his necessary journeys in a post-chaise. The charge was certainly made on the country rates; but the law had applied a remedy, where it was found burthensome; and it was the fault of the country, if it were not made use of where the necessity existed. In Lancashire it was acted on; and in the county of Surrey, notice had been given that the question would be brought under consideration at the next quarter sessions. But what, he would ask, was the burthen? it would not, in any one instance, amount to more than five farthings in the pound. This was a very trifling remuneration, when placed in competition with the good effects that would be produced by inciting respectable persons to fill the office.

Sir *James Graham* was aware, that the House could not be too cautious in laying additional burthens on the people at the present moment: but the utmost extent of the burthen now required to be imposed was about five or six shillings on each parish. That could never be considered an important sum to the inhabitants of any county, particularly when they reflected that, by paying it, they were pretty sure of having a respectable and intelligent coroner. To prove that this valuable officer was at present inadequately rewarded, the hon. baronet adverted to a case, which occurred not far from London, where the coroner was obliged to attend three days and nights to investigate the circumstances of an atrocious murder. By his indefatigable exertions, the murderers were traced out; but still for three days anxious attendance, he received no more than 20*s*. and 9*d*. per mile for his travelling. This rate was settled by the 25th Geo. 2nd upwards of sixty years ago, and was wholly disproportioned to the necessity of the case. Those gentlemen had frequently 40 or 50 miles to ride; sometimes amongst mountains, and in the midst of snow, where they often ran the risk of being lost; and surely it could not be contended, that the pittance they received was a fair remuneration for such labour. If he conceived that the proposed increase would bear hard on the agricultural interest, he would not vote for it. But, feeling that it would not, and knowing the importance and utility of the office (one of the most ancient that was known in the country) it should receive his support.

Mr. *Harvey* said, the grand jury of the county of Norfolk had often lamented, that they had not power to grant to the coroner a greater allowance than was warranted by act of parliament. On inquiry, it would be found that something was due to the individuals who filled this important office, which the legislature ought to see discharged.

Lord *Stanley* said, as an hon. gentleman had stated, that additional allowances were made to the coroner, in the county of Lancashire, he felt it his duty to observe, that he knew of no such circumstance.

Mr. *H. Sumner* explained. What he said was, not that an additional allowance was granted to the coroner, in Lancashire —but that the freeholders of that county had acted on the provisions of the bill for equalizing the county rates.

Mr. *Mellish* expressed his opinion, that the coroner was, in many instances, not even paid his expenses. The bill, he conceived, ought to go to a committee.

The motion for the committal of the bill was then carried without a division.

LONDON PETITION FOR RETRENCHMENT OF MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT, &c.] The Sheriffs of London presented at the bar a Petition from the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Commons of the City of London, in Common Council assembled, setting forth,

" That the petitioners cannot refrain from congratulating the House and the country at large upon the sympathy it has so honourably manifested with the feelings and sufferings of the people, upon the rejection of the attempt of ministers, in violation of the faith of parliament, to entail upon the country the most unjust, inquisitorial, and degrading impost that ever harassed and oppressed this nation; that after the unexampled exertions and sacrifices the country has made in a contest unprecedented in history, and the distress and privations they have endured, the petitioners had formed the most confident expectations, that upon the restoration of peace they should at least have been relieved from the most galling and oppressive of their burthens; that they should have witnessed the whole energies of the government directed towards the reduction of war establishments, and devising measures of reformation and retrenchment in the national expenditure; that the petitioners were the more sanguine in these expectations, from the gracious recommendation, at the opening of the session, in the speech from the throne, and the pledge given by the House in the address to his royal highness the Prince Regent; that the petitioners have with grief and disappointment observed, that notwithstanding these assurances, notwithstanding the frequent recommendations of committees of the House, and the continued and urgent petitions of the people to parliament, no such measures have been adopted; that the petitioners have on the contrary seen, at a moment of such general distress and suffering, a wasteful profusion and extravagance pervade every branch of the government, the augmentation of salaries in various departments, the civil list, after the repeated parliamentary aids, again deeply in arrear; above all, the proposed immense and before unheard of military establishments, uncalled for by the internal or external state of the country, repugnant to all the wise principles and maxims of our ancestors, highly dangerous to the liberties of the people, and subversive of the constitution; that so long (they conceive) as such a standing army is continued, so long is the constitution suspended; that thus are the petitioners, at a time of profound peace, called upon to support expensive and dangerous establishments, suitable only to a state of war, and greatly exceeding those of some of the most glorious wars this country has been engaged in, all tending to increase and perpetuate a corrupt and overwhelming influence, poisoning the very sources of national happiness and prosperity, and sapping the foundations of the British constitution; that the petitioners are firmly persuaded, that with the reduction of these expensive and unnecessary military establishments to a constitutional standard, and a due attention to reform and economy in the administration of affairs, there can exist no necessity for the imposition of additional burthens upon a people already borne down by excessive taxation; and agricultural and commercial difficulties; that the petitioners humbly submit to the House, that the sufferings the people have endured, and the pressure which now bears so heavily upon them, will no longer admit of those taxes which have oppressed and impoverished the country being wasted in thoughtless profusion or criminal extravagance; that it would exceed the patience of the people to see sums thus wrung from their industry corruptly and venally thrown away in false splendour, or in multiplying the means of corrupting those who should be their representatives, the guardians of their liberties, and their protectors from plunder and oppression; that, in the language of a memorable protest however the waste of public money and the profusion of useless places and salaries may have been overlooked in the days of wealth and prosperity, the necessities of the present times can no longer endure the same system of corruption and prodigality; and from the experience of this, as well as other countries, times of necessity have always been times of reform; that that necessity, the petitioners humbly conceive, is at length arrived, and does imperiously require prompt, vigorous, and disinterested exertions, and real and substantial reformation; the petitioners therefore humbly pray, that the House will most seriously take into consideration the patience which the people have shown, under the most trying difficulties; and that they will be pleased to reduce the proposed enormous military establishments to a constitutional standard, and adopt the most speedy and effectual measures for lessening the national burthens by reducing exorbitant salaries, abolishing all unnecessary places, pensions, appointments, and establishments, by introducing a system of reformation and retrenchment in every branch of the public expenditure, and adopting the most rigid economy in every department of the state."

Sir *James Shaw* observed, that it must be the anxious wish of every member of that House, and of every man in the country, to practise the most rigid economy, and he trusted that the government, acting upon that principle, would do every thing in its power to make reductions to the utmost possible extent.

Mr. *Ponsonby* rose to express his satisfaction that the city of London were acquainted with that which most gentlemen in that House knew, the necessity of every retrenchment in the public expenditure which could be made. It must have struck that House and the public, that hitherto the only progress they had made was in putting an end to two very odious and injurious taxes: but on the subject of expense they had done as yet very little. Their duty now, however, was, to proceed upon that subject, and he was sure it would be unnecessary to remind the House, that although an end had been put to those taxes, yet, unless they curtailed the expenses of the country, other taxes must be put on in their place.

Mr. *Preston* wished to know from the Chancellor of the Exchequer where the fund was, from which he could raise seventeen millions for the peace establishment? Was he to procure it from the landed, the commercial, or the manufacturing interest? He was sure it could not be raised from any one of them. By the conduct of ministers, the country was placed in a dilemma, was plunged into a state of distress, out of which she could not be extricated, unless by the adoption of a system of the most rigid economy.

Mr. *William Smith* bore testimony to the respectability of the court of common council which had agreed to the petition. With the exception of a few verbal amendments, and some slight difference of opinion on minor points, the petition was unanimously acceded to.

The petition was ordered to lie on the table.

Army Estimates.] Mr. *Wynn* moved that the paper before the House, respecting the late appointment of sir T. Thomson, should be printed. In order to bring this subject before the House, he gave notice, that on an early day he should move for a new writ for Rochester. While on his legs, he wished to ask the noble lord opposite if fresh estimates were to be made on the several heads of expenditure, in the room of those which had been withdrawn?

Lord *Castlereagh* said, the object of his noble friend (lord Palmerston) in withdrawing the estimates, was to take an opportunity of showing, in connexion, the amount of the reductions to be made in the course of the present year. In some of the debates which had taken place, he (lord Castlereagh) had deprecated the dispositions shown by some of the gentlemen opposite to consider the estimates as a part of the permanent peace establishment, or even to consider the expense on them, as that which was to continue throughout the present year. It was the wish of government to make immediately all the reductions which could be safely effected in the first instance, as it was their hope to bring forward estimates materially different in point of expense in a future year. But in consequence of the disposition which had been manifested to argue on the estimates, as if the expense on them were to continue through the whole of the present year, his noble friend had wished to withdraw them, in order to show them the various reductions that would be made before the year expired. It was intended to let the House see (as nearly as this could be done) what would be the expense of the end of the year, as well as that of the beginning. To accomplish such a task with all the vigilance that could possibly be exerted, it was obvious the inquiry necessary must take up some considerable time. A part of the reductions contemplated, from local circumstances could not be completed at the commencement of the year. The object of his noble friend, he wished it to be understood, was, to show the House what changes had been made, what were now making, and what would be made in the course of the present year. The House would be enabled to see how long some of the expenses which appeared on the estimates would continue. It would be seen what were to remain for three or six months, or what for a longer period. In this respect the estimates to be produced would go further than those which had been already before the House.

Mr. *Wynn* said, he was perfectly satisfied with the explanation of the noble lord, but at the same time, he could not help observing, that the mode now pursued was entirely different from that adopted at every former peace, either in 1763, 1783, or 1802. It had uniformly been the practice for parliament to be made acquainted with those details in the very first moment of entering upon them. Estimates were submitted to that House, for the first three months, and a second, and a third estimate was afterwards prepared, which thus showed the progress of the diminution in them. He wished, however, to inquire of the noble lord, whether he apprehended there would be any inconvenience, in framing this new document, to give the number of staff officers, on foreign stations, as well as on the home station? It was impossible when one lumping sum was voted for the staff generally, to be able to scrutinize into the details. If there were no objection to that information being given, he would afterwards move for a return of the number of staff officers, and officers of hospitals, serving on foreign stations, in 1792, in order that they might be enabled to form the same comparison upon that, as upon the home staff, between the two periods.

Lord *Castlereagh* hoped the hon. gentleman would postpone his motion for the present, till his noble friend had brought forward his estimates, when he would take an opportunity of describing the reductions to be made on the foreign staff in the course of the present year; and he did not foresee any objection on the part of the noble lord to the production of the returns alluded to. With respect to the returns for the three first quarters of the year, which the hon. gentleman wished for, he did not see that these could be given, but those about to be brought forward, from the arrangement he had described, would, he apprehended, answer his purpose.

Mr. *Wynn* acquiesced in the noble lord's wish.

CONTINUANCE OF THE WAR DUTIES OF CUSTOMS AND EXCISE.] The House having resolved itself into a Committee of Ways and Means,

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* rose. He said, it was not his intention to take up any large portion of the time of the committee, as the proposition which he wished to submit to it was very short and simple. He would therefore confine himself to a brief explanation of the nature of the measure which he was about to propose. The House would recollect how the various branches of the customs and excise duties had been augmented and applied during the war. They would also recollect that, during the later periods of the war, in the years 1807, 1809, and 1811, the expenses of the loans had been charged upon these war taxes. It was, therefore, highly important that the consolidated fund should be rendered equal to bear those changes permanently. This would be best effected by continuing those war taxes already appropriated for this purpose by the vote of parliament. He, therefore, now intended to propose, that the war taxes, under the heads of customs, should be carried to the consolidated fund, to defray those expenses incurred during the war. Considerable additions had been made to the duties on imports, exports, and tonnage; but these, with all the other war taxes, as they now stood, would, by the existing act, expire in a very few months. It was his intention, at the proper time, to propose to the House some modifications in the duties on imports, as he believed they were those which might be made permanent with the least inconvenience to the public. With respect, therefore, to the whole of the war taxes under the head of customs, he intended that they should be made permanent, and carried to the consolidated fund. But with regard to the other great branch—the excise war duties, his intention was to keep them separate from the consolidated fund; and although he did not foresee any exact period when they could be given up, yet he would not propose to declare them absolutely permanent. By keeping them separate from the consolidated fund, they could, from time to time, be brought before the House, and receive such modifications as might be thought convenient. For the present, therefore, he should only propose to continue the excise war duties for a period of five years. At the same time, he must say, he saw no early prospect of being able to give up those duties. He had some measures in contemplation, for the purpose of repressing smuggling, which he hoped would have the effect of making this branch of the revenue considerably more productive. It was not his intention to propose any continuation of the additional duty on malt; and, in consequence of the cessation of this duty, some regulations would be necessary for the convenience of the trade, with a view to the re-payment of the duty of the stock on hand when the act would expire. There was another reason why it was advisable to separate the excise duties from the consolidated fund, arising from the loss which would be occasioned to the public on the amount of the current duties, from the way in which the taxes going to the consolidated fund were paid into the exchequer. The whole estimated amount of the war excise duties, deducting the additional malt duty, was 3,800,000*l.*—that of the customs, 2,760,000*l.* Although he would not now go into any general financial statement, he might mention to the House, that though they had thought proper to reject that system of finance which appeared, in his judgment, to be the best, yet he had no intention of attempting to substitute any new taxes to replace that of which he had been deprived, nor to provide for the expenses of any loan. He should therefore attempt to defray the expense of any sums which might be borrowed in the course of the year, in such a way as to prevent any material pressure upon the money market. With this view, during the present year, it was most desirable to take nothing from the sinking fund. Having given such short explanations as he thought were necessary, he would conclude by moving the resolutions to which he anticipated no objection. The resolutions were then read, viz.

"That, towards raising the supply granted to his majesty, the several duties of customs, which by an act of the last session of parliament to continue certain temporary or war duties of customs on the importation of goods, wares, and merchandise into Great Britain, were continued until the 5th day of July 1816, shall be made perpetual." 2. "That towards raising the supply granted to his majesty, the several additional duties of excise in Great Britain, which by an act of the last session of parliament were continued until the 5th day of July 1816, shall be further continued for a time to be limited, save and except the duties on malt made in England and Scotland, or brought from Scotland into England, granted by an act made in the 43d year of his present majesty."

Mr. *Tierney* said, that all he could gather from the speech of the right hon. gentleman was merely this—that though by the vigilant attention of parliament to the interests of the country he had been driven from the strong hold he had formed for himself, yet he was on no account to give up any part of the expense for the vast military system which himself and his colleagues had created, and that though he had no new taxes to propose, yet by means of modifications, by means of new regulations, and by means of a loan, he was determined to carry his favourite military scheme into execution, without regarding the call of the country for retrenchments. He wished to know if this was what the right hon. gentleman really meant in what he had now stated?

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* replied, that he had certainly stated that he did not mean to propose any great measure of taxation, but to defray the expense of such sums as it might be necessary to borrow, so as not to charge it upon the sinking fund. It could be done therefore by the modification of some of the existing duties. He was sure the House would think it best to keep entire the sinking fund; and when the question was as to the preservation of the sinking fund, they were at least bound to do so much for the support of the public credit during the present distress of the country, as not to touch that fund.

Mr. *Tierney* said, that as they were not now going into the details of the budget, he did not feel himself called upon to give any opinion on the general statement of the right hon. gentleman. He could only say, that he was very happy to find that the right hon. gentleman had not carried into effect that terrible revenge with which he had threatened the House in the shape of new taxes, in case they dared to reject the property tax. It now appeared that this threat had been a mere *brutum fulmen:* and he would say this of it, that of all the propositions that he had ever heard, it would have been the most foolish. As to the question now before the House, he saw no objection to making the customs war duties permanent. It was an arrangement from which, he thought, no inconvenience could result, and it was one to which the faith of parliament was pledged by its votes, as to the loans during the war. As to the other branch of the revenue, the excise, it was for the present only intended to continue the war duties for five years, and the annual produce of these (in round numbers) was estimated at four millions. On this subject there was an old battle between himself and the right hon. gentleman; and he still maintained, that with regard to this part of the subject, the right hon. gentleman did not look the situation of the country fairly in the face. He had no confidence in any contemplated arrangements for the prevention of smuggling, as none of those which had already been adopted, and which, before they were actually tried, had been declared infallible, had hitherto succeeded; nay, the increase of the revenue to be thereby made, calculated upon in the ways and means for the year, after all had entirely failed. How could any arrangements be good against smugglers who were satisfied if they could save one cargo out of seven? He could not therefore agree to allow the right hon. gentleman to carry on for five years an experimental warfare with smugglers. It would be better at once to appoint a committee to inquire into the subject, for the purpose of supplying themselves and the House with the necessary information. He begged the right hon. gentleman to turn this subject in his mind. He feared the smugglers were too strong and cunning a body of men for all that sagacity which the right hon. gentleman possessed. He had often suggested the propriety of submitting the consideration of these taxes to a committee, but that suggestion seemed not to have been congenial to the feelings and wishes of the right hon. gentleman. The taxes of this country were indeed heavy, and he trusted in God would soon be lightened; but when he considered that these particular taxes were proposed for five years, he dreaded that a system of smuggling on a formidable scale would take place, ruinous in the extreme to the revenue. He really thought some regulations on this head should be promptly made, as he very much doubted the experiment of ruining smuggling by continuing the taxes, and was much averse to the proposed plan of checking it by means of cavalry. He would not ask any opinion of the committee on this subject, but certainly thought it had very strong claims to their serious attention.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* thought it necessary to make some reply to what the right hon. gentleman had stated with respect to the terrible arrangement which he imagined to have been in contemplation. He certainly had stated, that something must be done by a system of taxes, but so much objection existed against the assessed taxes, that he thought it not advisable to resort to them, and had therefore pressed the property tax, because there was no available substitute; and it was on the same ground that he now proposed a continuance of the war duties on excise and customs, because there was no available substitute. He was very far from denying the critical stuation in which the finances of the country were placed: but with respect to the evils that it was supposed would result from smuggling, they might be greatly obviated by vigilance and activity. The duties of the customs had not yet decreased, and with the aid of some further powers which he should propose for some of the departments concerned in the collection of them, he hoped that no material decrease would take place. He felt himself bound to state his opinion with that reserve, as to the amount of his calculations, which such a subject seemed to demand, but still without the slightest feeling of despondency as to the ultimate result.

Mr. *Ponsonby* did not rise for the purpose of making any long observations, but from all he had heard from the right hon. gentleman, the House of Commons were now to proceed in the same extravagant mode, as if ministers had not been deprived of the property and malt taxes, [Hear]. The system was in fact to be the very same as before, without any regard to economy. The House by their recent vote had decided in a very strong manner against the property tax, yet the minister of finance had that evening told the committee of ways and means, that though he had been thwarted in that plan, he was not determined to relax any part of his extravagant expenditure, but was resolved if he could not get it one way to have it another. What was this, but in other words telling them, that he regarded not the mode, but the amount of his expenditure—that they might deprive him of this or that tax, or of whatever they pleased, but if they took it away one way, he would have means to the same amount in another way [Hear, hear!].

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, the right hon. gentleman who had last spoken, perfectly comprehended the nature of his proceeding. But he could not see with that right hon. gentleman in what way the proposed alteration in the taxes had any bearing on the subject of the expenditure of the country: the question of expenditure must rest on its own ground. Thinking, as he did, that the amount of the various services which had been submitted to parliament was absolutely necessary, he did not see any immediate opening for farther reduction. It was equally the duty of the House to watch, and of the government to correct any thing in the expenditure which could be avoided, consistently with the safety and interests of the country. He did allow that a loan might have the effect of encouraging expenditure in the government, because it was a mode of raising money without any immediate pressure upon the country; but he hoped that in the present instance it would have no such effect upon the measures of government—that it would not prevent them from cutting off any expense which could be avoided with safety to the nation.

Mr. *Ponsonby* said, the public now saw what were the motives of his majesty's government, and by what principles they were actuated, in the system of finance proposed for the present year. They demanded eight millions and a half of money, and had formed a very fine plan for getting that sum, when unfortunately they had been completely outwitted by a vote of the House. Yet they took no warning, and seemed not to have benefitted by this salutary lesson. The country were still to stand in the same situation as before. No reduction whatever was to be made in the extravagant mode of expenditure, but since ministers could no longer tax, they were going to borrow. He was afraid they would not do it with a very good grace.

Mr. *Huskisson* said, he highly approved of the mode proposed by his right hon. friend of supplying the deficiency by a loan. It was no doubt, the duty of parliament vigilantly to attend to every measure proposed by his majesty's ministers, and he had never known them averse to that duty. It was surely obvious to every one, that the ways and means should be adapted to the extent of the supplies. It became the committee of ways and means to grant a vote adequate to the supplies agreed to by the House. He regretted that his right hon. friend had been deprived of the property tax, which he considered one of the best ever laid on the country; but since that was the case, it was indispensably requisite the deficiency should be made good, unless, indeed, the committee could come to the singular resolution of at once reducing the whole of the proposed establishment. He was as anxious as any man could be for economy, but since the House had agreed to a certain establishment, it was requisite they should have means to defray the necessary expense. The taxes now to continue were acknowledged to be inadequate for this purpose, a loan was therefore necessary to make up the deficiency, and he would ask, was it possible in any way else to meet the expenditure of the country? He thought that to act otherwise would be to delude the public, and to trifle with their best interests.

Mr. *Ponsonby* said, that he must have sat so many years in the House to very little purpose, if he did not know the difference between a committee of supply and a committee of ways and means. What he had said was this—that the amount which the finance minister had calculated upon receiving from the property and malt taxes, he now intended to supply himself with by means of a loan. Now, as far as he understood the argument of the right hon. gentleman who spoke last, it went to this—that since the whole nine millions could not be saved, they were to save none. There was no question that the ordinary revenue would not cover the expenses of the year. The amount of the loan was the question. He would repeat what he had formerly said, that ministers, regardless of being defeated in the property tax, were determined not to lessen their expenditure, but to have it right or wrong. Thus hope was cut off from the country. In vain had they unanimously reprobated the idea of an abominable tax being continued; in vain had they been successful in their efforts against the tax; when the same lavish expenditure was still to continue, regardless of the feelings or privations of the people.

Mr. *Huskisson*, in explanation, said, that the chancellor of the exchequer had not yet stated the amount of his loan, nor had the estimates been reduced, as they probably would in the details. He repeated his former statement, and insisted, that as the House was in a committee of supply, it was not regular to enter into discussions foreign to that subject.

Mr. *Baring* observed, that the design of the chancellor of the exchequer was now too well seen through. Though the people had been relieved from the property tax, not in consequence of any disposition on his part to grant them that relief, but by their own spirited exertions, yet he seemed determined to permit nŏ advantage to result from that happy event to public credit. The country must not have the smallest benefit from this reduction of the taxes. The right hon. gentleman seemed to think there was no connexion between a reduction of the taxes and a reduction of the expense of the country, but he went on in the same error. Because an establishment had been voted in the House, the country must, some way or other, make up the unexpected loss he had sustained by the annihilation of the property tax. It was impossible for him to reduce his establishment—that would be too great a condescension—too much flattering the prejudices of the people—he must, therefore, make up his expenses, and get money where he could. It was not enough that the people had rid themselves of two taxes which it was not just for them to bear; he and his colleagues were determined they would not retrench. The right hon. gentleman who spoke last insisted, that those who now talked of a loan, mistook the committee of ways and means for a committee of supply. Now what was most to be complained of in the system of ministers was, that the House was made first to vote the supplies, without looking at the means of the country to support such an expenditure, which was made an after consideration in the committee of ways and means. This was contrary to all the rules of prudence—contrary to the practice of every private individual, who, if he had any wisdom in the management of his affairs, always looked to his means before he resolved to incur any expense. How could the House look with any degree of sense at estimates until it knew how much the country could afford? It was now seen that these estimates could not be voted without having recourse to an intolerable tax on the one hand, or a measure to injure the public credit on the other. However, there was this result from all that had been stated by the chancellor of the exchequer, that no salvation for the country could be expected but in looking at the estimates with a conviction that retrenchments were absolutely necessary. He was aware that this was not the proper time for entering into a discussion of that point; but he had said thus much, because either some great exaggeration had been made, or some palpable mistake committed by the chancellor of the exchequer, when he held out the amount of the property tax as five millions, and the malt duty two millions—in all seven millions—after the remission of the tax on agricultural horses. The right hon. gentleman in a fit of dissatisfaction against the country and the House, on the event of his favourite measure having been rejected, held out very gloomy prospects, or he must have formerly held out false ones, in the hope of inducing the House to adopt the measure.

Lord *Castlereagh* really apprehended that whether the tax or loan were adopted, the country would evidently see it was the wish of his majesty's ministers to adopt the most rigid economy [A laugh from the opposition]. The only question now before the committee, and one which certainly deserved much attention was, how the supplies agreed to were to be supported, and what was the lowest possible scale of the expenses of the country in a state of peace. He thought the House of Commons in depriving government of eight millions, had materially affected the plan of economy in which his majesty's ministers had formed. He deprecated the gloomy view of the country which gentlemen on the opposite side seemed so much delighted in giving. The country was not nearly so depressed, nor were its funds so exhausted as they would persuade members to believe. He contended for the propriety of the establishment voted by the House. It was necessary for the honour, the safety, and the prosperity of Britain. When the positions of armies abroad were considered, when the resources necessary at home for continually relieving those abroad from their arduous duties were also taken into account, he considered it impossible to realize, in any point of view, that immediate reduction which gentlemen on the opposite side demanded. He would beg the committee to remember that this establishment was voted only for one year, and by no means intended to be permanent, and he would also assure them, that it was the earnest wish of his majesty's government, to be as economical as possible. But government detested that economy, which could only be purchased by the sacrifice of the dearest interests of the country [Hear, hear!]. Many reductions would actually be made in the course of the year. It was impossible at present, minutely to point out what these would be, but they should certainly soon be laid before the House, in one combined whole. Many reductions had already been made in disbanding second battalions, disembodying the militia, &c. It was not easy to go over the whole body of the estimates, but the House would see the progress of reduction in a paper of very great importance, which was at present preparing, and for the production of which he would soon move. He again deprecated the idea which gentlemen on the other side entertained, that ministers would not have made any reduction, had they not been thwarted in their views respecting the property tax. He could wish they would treat ministers with a little more of that charity, to which they made such high pretensions. Agreeably to the order of the House, a document would, in the course of that evening be presented, containing an account of the various reductions in expenditure; but he cautioned the House before hand against forming too high an opinion of it, as it only came down to the 5th of January, whereas many reductions had been made since that period, and many more would take place before the 5th of July. In the paper he had formerly mentioned, which was now preparing, the savings adopted by ministers were traced in regular order, under the various political, military, and naval departments. He was sorry to hear the country continually described as in an exhausted state. It was degrading to the character of this great empire to say, that it was incapable of providing for its own security. The country was in no such melancholy state. It was, indeed, depressed, but that pressure was temporary, and its prosperity would soon be evinced in a satisfactory manner to parliament. He by no means wished parliament to delay the discussion, as he was prepared to meet it on fair grounds; but he wished gentlemen, whose views were of so melancholy a cast, to delay forming too gloomy an opinion till the proper documents were before them. It was hurtful to public feeling, it was in every point of view injurious in the extreme, to be perpetually brooding over this dark picture of the state of the country. Ministers wished to be economical—they were determined to be so—but they knew too well and valued too highly British rights and British privileges, to sacrifice them for ill-judged retrenchment. The plan proposed by his right hon. friend for meeting the exigencies of the year, had his warmest support, and he had no doubt would ultimately tend to the promotion of the best interests of this great empire.

Mr. *Tierney* denied that gentlemen on his side of the House took a gloomy view of the situation of the country. All they wanted was, that every possible reduction should be made, and they said that the situation of the country required economy. He would be glad to know how long the noble lord had been in his economical fit? He believed that House owed the change in the noble lord almost entirely to the hon. member for Suffolk (Mr. Gooch), who with a loudness of tone which, if it had come from the other side of the House, the noble lord would have called clamour, had told ministers, that unless they adopted measures of economy they would not have his support. It was from that time the noble lord had had this fit. As soon as the noble lord found that office and economy must go together, he became an economist [Hear, hear!]. He was now willing, forsooth, to get the country out of its gloomy situation by pure dint of economy [a laugh]. The noble lord had asked, why it was conceived that the army estimates had been intended for the whole year. Simply because they had been called upon to vote them for the whole year. On that occasion nothing had been said about the different quarters. Now the House were challenged to investigate these estimates point by point; and were told by the noble lord, that in about a week he would show them a statement of the proposed reductions that would delight their very hearts [a laugh]. Why was not this paper mentioned before? Because something had happened since. Because his majesty's ministers had been beaten—for their trifling majority was a defeat, on the question respecting Mr. Croker and his colleague. But with all this profession of economy on the part of the noble lord, he (Mr. Tierney) pledged himself in about half an hour, when the navy estimates should come before the House, to show its amount. A paper was now it seemed to be produced in order to show the disposition of his majesty's ministers to save the public money. What was the very first item of the account recently laid on the table of the increase and diminution in the expenses of the public establishments up to the end of January 1816? That in the department of the treasury alone there had been an increase of 10,000*l.* [Hear, hear!]. There was a sum of 6,000*l.* for contingencies, the details of which, were the Speaker in the chair, he would instantly move for. If he were to ask the noble lord what this increase meant, he presumed the answer would be, "Oh, don't mind that. God bless you! that was three months ago, when I was in an extravagant mood [a laugh.]!" The noble lord now promised economy. It was the duty of the House not to trust to such promises, but to go on practically, by voting reductions of expenditure. If they did their duty to their country they would disregard all the noble lord's professions, and not lose a single day in forcing practical economy on his majesty's government. With a view to take his share of this duty, he gave notice that he would speedily repeat the motion which he had made at the commencement of the late war, for the reduction of the office of the third secretary of state. When that motion should be before the House, they would hear what the noble lord could say in defence of its continuation; but he (Mr. T.) could not conceive the possibility of any satisfactory argument on the subject. He again implored parliament not to listen to the flourishing and recantation of the noble lord, but to continue to discharge their duty in the way they had lately done, and thereby give themselves the strongest claim to the gratitude and affection of the country [Hear, hear!].

Mr. *J. H. Smyth* recommended the appointment of a committee to inquire into the state of the public expenditure and finances. Such a proceeding would be sanctioned by precedent. At the suggestion of Mr. Pitt a similar committee had been constituted in 1786; and in 1791 and 1797 committees of the same description had also been appointed. At the end of the war before the last, the charge on the debt was ten millions. It was now forty millions; and as the resources of the country were by no means increased in proportion to the necessity, an investigation which might suggest the best mode of relieving ourselves from our embarrassments, appeared to him to be the more imperative.

Mr. *Thompson* conceived that the right hon. gentleman's plan was, in lieu of the property tax, to borrow the sum required for the public service, and to raise the interest by modifications and additions with regard to various articles of merchandise. Although this would certainly be much felt by the mercantile interest, he had no hesitation in stating, that in his opinion it would be much less hostilely considered by them than the continuance of the property tax. Indeed, he entertained great hopes that the right hon. gentleman might be able to raise 3 or 400,000*l.* in the way he conceived him to have described, without creating any great burthen on the commercial world. He hoped it was to be distinctly understood, that the right hon. gentleman did not mean to touch the sinking fund. This was most necessary. Nothing also could be more desirable than that parliament should continue their determination to adhere to the strictest economy, and to examine every article of the public expenditure, with the most anxious disposition to retrench as far as the exigencies of the public service would admit.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* was very happy that the hon. gentleman opposite had given him an opportunity of again stating his intention of not touching the sinking fund, which he should be enabled to effect by proposing some modifications on the customs duties to meet the expenses of the loan.

Mr. *Grenfell* said, that the country had expected that the decision of parliament on the property tax would prove an additional stimulus to the reduction of the public expenditure; instead of which, if he understood the right hon. gentleman rightly, what he said was, that if the House would not let his majesty's ministers have six millions through the medium of the property tax, they must get it in some other way. He wished to ask the right hon. gentleman whether he meant to propose the remission of the war duty on malt on the stock now in hand; as that was an important question. As he was on his legs, he would once more press on the right hon. gentleman and on the House the justice and the expediency, in the present exigency of the state, of taking from the bank of England at least a part of the 800,000*l.* which they now derived annually from the continuation of the restriction on their payment in specie.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* replied, that with respect to the war duty on malt, it was intended to propose the remission of it on that stock which should be on hand in July. As to the hon. gentleman's proposition regarding the bank, he conceived that any participation in the profits arising from the continuation of the restriction would be wholly unworthy of parliament. The question rested on its own grounds; and if the restriction was proper, it ought to be continued without reference to any other consideration. As to what had fallen from the hon. gentleman on the subject of economy, he could assure him that his majesty's ministers needed no stimulus to do their duty; and that they would be guided only by a sense of what they conceived was owing to the country.

Colonel *Wood* expressed his apprehension, that amidst the propositions which it was intended to submit to parliament, the interest of one valuable class of the community, namely, the little farmers, would be compromised. It had been said by the chancellor of the exchequer, before the rejection of the property tax, that if that measure were agreed to, he would propose to take off the tax on agricultural horses from such farmers as did not rent above 100*l.* a year. This was a very numerous and a very suffering description of the people; and he was very anxious to know whether or not it was yet intended so to relieve them? The tax on agricultural horses pressed more heavily on them even than the property tax. Its amount was more than 10 per cent. Those farmers paid now 17*s.* 6*d.* duty for every horse; 2*l.* 17*s.* for any horse which they could have been proved to have ridden; and in the last event, 10*s.* for a servant to take care of the said horse. These two last duties had been frequently levied on farmers who had merely used their cart horses to carry them to a market or a fair; and he trusted, if they were not to be relieved from the tax altogether, that at least they would be guarded from this vexatious interpretation of it.

Mr. *Peter Moore* expected to have heard from ministers the scheme of finance for the year: but instead of that, he had heard only of schemes to provide substitutes for the loss of the income tax. The war expenses had amounted to 1500 millions. With that sum we ought to have commanded the whole world, without firing a shot. Last year it was not our men, but our money, that congregated all Europe. It was on the ground of the profuse expense, that he with some others always had opposed the war. He always had believed that the war was not carried on to put down the French revolution and French principles, so much as it was from the dread of reform at home. The chancellor of the exchequer ought now to come forward with his whole plan, to take the expense of last year, and see, in all respects, where it could be cut down. Then they might come to some kind of general issue; and he was confident they would find that they might remove the greater part of the burthens. We ought to go into every department, and say what was or was not necessary. A noble lord had spoken of a saving of 500,000*l.* a-year, which was not a sum worth looking at in the broad view of the question. It was not sixpence a pound in the expenditure. He had looked to the character of the chancellor of the exchequer for all that was righteous and good; but he would put it to him whether this was the degree of relief the country had a right to expect. He again condemned him for submitting a partial statement to the House, and concluded by strongly enforcing the necessity of a severe and strict economy.

Mr. *Finlay* always considered that the remedy lay in the diminution of expenditure. The diminution of the duties operating on the distilleries was, he was confident, the only way to put down smugglers, by enabling the legal distilleries to provide a palatable liquor for the people of Scotland. The diminution would not be detrimental to the revenue.

The resolutions were then agreed to.

NAVY ESTIMATES.] The order of the day having been read for resolving into the committee of supply, sir G. Warrender moved to refer the Navy Estimates to the consideration of the said committee.

Mr. *Tierney* availed himself of this motion to address a few observations to the House on this most important subject. An examination of these navy estimates would furnish a clear exposition of the noble lord's economy; and if he did not make out against his majesty's ministers one of the strongest cases that had ever been established against any government, he was utterly mistaken in his anticipations. He wished, in the first place, to impress on the House, that the discussion into which they were about to enter, had nothing to do with what was generally termed the naval service, and which as there were some who thought it had been reduced too low, so there were none who were of opinion that it ought to be reduced lower. Those estimates had no reference to the naval service, as connected with the naval defence of the country by naval officers. They related only to the civil administration of the navy; and as such demanded the most minute investigation. As the best mode of exhibiting their true character, he had taken the trouble to compare them with former estimates; and for this purpose he had chosen those for the year 1814, so that the estimates of the last year of the war, and those of the first year of the peace, might be compared together. If on this comparison parliament should find that the amount of the latter exceeded that of the former, it would be time for them to look about them. He unequivocally asserted that, with all the professions of economy which the House had that night heard, it would appear that the aggregate expense of these estimates was greater in the present, the first year of the peace, than they had been in 1814, the last year of the war. The right hon. the chancellor of the exchequer opposite smiled at this. He was glad of it. The right hon. gentleman's change of countenance would show him (Mr. Tierney) the progress he made in his statement [a laugh].

The estimates were divided into several heads. These were the admiralty, the navy office, the navy pay office, the victualling office, the home dock-yards, the out-ports, the foreign yards, and so on. With respect to the first branch—the admiralty, the estimate for the present year, including the office of the paymaster of the marines, was 61,223*l.* There certainly had been a reduction of 1,500*l* resulting from a late debate in that House, being the salaries proposed by government to be given to an hon. gentleman opposite (Mr. Croker), and another respectable gentleman, not a member of that House (Mr. Barrow); and he confessed his regret that, owing to the delicacy of some hon. gentlemen who, however averse to the proposition, would not vote against it until it should be formally before parliament in the shape of estimate, the House had been prevented from compelling this reduction by its own act. However, the sum now proposed for the admiralty was 61,223*l.* The sum proposed in 1814 was 71,726*l.* Here was, *primâ facie*, a diminution of above 10,000*l.* But when sifted—when those items were deducted in which a saving could not by possibility be avoided, it would be found that the actual decrease was but 923*l.* The truth would appear to be, that wherever there was a saving, it did not proceed from the conduct of the admiralty itself, but arose from other causes independent of the admiralty. He believed that going into details of this description was tedious to some; but they were necessary for an important object. The saving was only an apparent one, of which by a few details he hoped he should soon convince the House. It appeared that the articles of stationary and contingencies for the hydrographer's office at the admiralty were for 1814, 5,000*l.*; whereas they were now reduced to 2,000*l.* But the diminution here was simply to be ascribed to the results of peace, which rendered it impossible that there could be business enough in that office to demand a sum nearly equal to what it might require in time of war. There was a saving in the article of general stationary for the admiralty which amounted in 1814 to 3,500*l.*; now it was only 3000*l.* making a decrease of 500*l.* But this small saving was very easily accounted for by any body who considered the reduction of the business, consequent upon the reduction of the seamen employed from 145,000 to 33,000. Surely this ought to make a considerable fall in this branch of expense. The other savings arose from similar circumstances. There was a chaplain-general, for instance, who had 610*l.* a-year, and the expense of 1500*l.* for the distribution of bibles and testaments, which stood in the estimates of 1814, but were of necessity omitted in the present. The item of disbursements to counsel for the prosecution of suits at law, which in the estimates of 1814 was 14,000*l.* was in the present, in consequence of the necessary decrease in the number of those suits, reduced to 10,000*l.* making a saving of 4000*l.* on that head. Thus, putting apart every thing that savoured of establishment, it would be found that in the items which he had mentioned 9607*l.* had been saved, the saving of which could not have been avoided; thus reducing the sum which in the first instance appeared to have been saved by the reduction of the establishment itself to 930*l.* as he had before mentioned. That was the sum, the glorious sum—he congratulated his majesty's ministers upon it,—which they had been able to deduct from the establishment of the admiralty, now the country was at peace, as compared with that establishment when the country was at war [Hear, hear!]! If he chose it, he might compare the present with the estimates of a year which would be still more advantageous to his statement, the first year of the war. In 1804, the first year of the war, the admiralty branch of the estimates had been 43,900*l.* now it was 61,223*l.* making the difference of above 17,000*l.* against us in the first year of a peace, as compared with the first year of a war!

The next branch of the estimates was those for the navy office. In 1814, that branch had been 81,109*l.*; now it was 84,169*l.* being an exceeding with respect to the navy board of 3060*l.* No great sum, he readily admitted, were it not for the difference in the situation of the country; and were it not that it appeared the navy board in time of war could do their work at an expense less than that at which they were able to do it in time of peace [Hear, hear!]. But let this branch of the present estimates, be compared with that of the estimates of 1804, and the difference would be still more striking. In 1804, the first year of the war, the estimate was 53,000*l.*; at present it was 84,000*l.* making us worse by 31,000*l.* in the first year of peace than we were in the first year of war! It was indispensable that the hon. baronet should show the House how these matters were. Any body who would take the trouble to read the accounts might see all this clearly. He should, however, try to make out a case for the worthy baronet, or for any other gentleman who had nerves enough to attempt an answer, and endeavour to show the economical mode in which government had set about these deductions.

The next item was the navy pay office. In 1814, the estimate was 44,948*l.*, the present estimate was 43,864*l.*; being an apparently less sum of 1084*l.* But if it were considered that the article of postage was diminished by 3000*l.*, a necessary and unavoidable diminution, it would appear that instead of a favourable change, the country in the first year of a peace, was in a worse situation, with respect to this estimate, by the sum of 1900*l.* than in the last year of a war. As in the former instances, it was not the amount of the sum to which he called the attention of the House, but the difference of the circumstances. He next adverted to the victualling office, and compared its present proposed expense with what it was in 1814. At that period it was estimated at 49,653*l.*, and in the present year, it was 49,195*l.* The difference of the decrease was small, but if the real savings in that department were considered, it would be found, that instead of a decrease, there had been a considerable increase. The savings which were to follow upon a time of peace, were a decrease in the postage of letters, which must be so numerous in time of war. Savings also were made in parish rates, and these, when set against the apparent decrease since 1814, would show that there had been a real increase of about 4000*l*; being so much more in the first year of peace, than it was in the last year of war. It was to be considered, with regard to these estimates, that the country was in a state of peace, and the cost of every thing was much less than in time of war. There was also a great saving in postage of letters, as he had before observed, and in many other expenses incidental to a state of war; and yet, comparing the estimates of the three departments to which he had alluded in the present year, with what they were in 1814, a decrease of only between 8 and 9000*l.* would be found. In 1804, they had been 166,000*l.*; in 1814, 247,000*l.*; and in 1816,238,400*l.* The proposed peace establishment for these offices in 1814 exceeded the war establishment of 1804 by 71,545*l.* And though there was an apparent reduction of 8,985*l.* from the establishments of 1814, yet the establishments had been increased since that period 10,303*l.* We had this year, therefore, the opportunity of spending 8,100*l.* for the advantages of peace.

The next head of expenditure, to which he begged leave to call the attention of the House, was the naval yards. This was a matter of the greatest consideration to every one. The difference between the expenditure of 1814 and 1816, in this department, could not fail to excite the astonishment of the House and the country. The expenses of the home yards in the year 1814, being the last year of the war, amounted only to 220,000*l.*; in 1816, the first year of the peace, they amounted to 229,722*l.*, making a difference of more than 9,000*l.* in favour of the war establishment. He was willing to allow that there were several articles that might have risen in price, and that some account might be given of the general excess, although he could not anticipate that any thing reasonable or satisfactory could be pleaded in favour of an expenditure so much opposed, *primâ facie*, to all ministerial professions of economy. In the outports there was likewise some difference to be observed between the expenditures of 1814 and 1816; but the sum altogether estimated under this head was so small, that it would be wasting the time of the House to enter into the comparison. The foreign yards were not so insignificant, and in them the difference of estimates for the two years of peace and war could not fail to strike the minds of hon. members. In the year 1804 the whole sum voted for foreign yards was only 7,469*l.*; in 1814 it amounted to 53,000*l.*; and in 1816 the estimate was fixed at 57,462*l.* Thus there would appear an enormous increase of the public burthens, from the charges of foreign yards, since the commencement of the war after the peace of Amiens. He well knew the answer that his majesty's ministers would make to this. He could anticipate their congratulations on the increase in our foreign dominions, and the argument they could then deduce for the increase of foreign expenditure. He merely mentioned the circumstance to show how much our boasted possessions cost us for maintaining them; but he would not so easily give up the argument in favour of reduction that arose from a comparison of the estimate of 1814 with the present year. The comparison was perfectly fair, as it could not be pretended that we had added to our foreign possessions since the last year of the war. We had all the foreign yards then that we possessed at the present moment, and yet we now paid 4,000*l.* more than we were required to do at that former period. The grand total of all these estimated expenses in 1804 amounted to 258,937*l.*; in 1814, to 528,000*l.*; in 1816, to 532,000*l.*; making an excess of 4,000*l.* in the first year of the peace over the last year of the war. This would appear not a little surprising, when it was considered that the naval force voted in the first of these periods was 100,000, in the second 143,000, and in the third, or present year, only 33,000 men.

The right hon. gentleman here went over the different naval yards of Deptford, Woolwich, Chatham, Sheerness, Portsmouth, and Plymouth, and pointed out the difference of the estimates that resulted from a comparison of the years 1801 and 1814, with the present, viz.:—For Deptford, in 1804, 11,576*l.*; in 1814, 27,529*l.*; in 1816, 27,533*l.*; for Woolwich, in 1804, 11,790*l.*; in 1814, 31,000*l.*; in 1816, 33,061*l.*; for Chatham, in 1804, 13,000*l.*; in 1814, 35,000*l.*; in 1816, 35,450*l.*: for Sheerness, in 1804, 10,000*l.*; in 1814, 24,000*l.*; in 1816, 25,453*l.*: for Portsmouth, in 1804, 19,000*l.*; in 1814, 56,000*l.*; in 1816, 60,728*l.*; for Plymouth; in 1804, 15,990*l.*; in 1814, 45,000*l.*; in 1816, 47,496*l.*, This was an important matter for the consideration of the House, as it would be a strong argument for a reduction of expenses in this department, rather than a ground for any increase; yet notwithstanding this disproportion, the House were now to be told that the expense in our dock-yards was to be 8,000*l.* more in the first year of peace than had been deemed sufficient in the last year of the war. This was a subject which required a world of explanation. It was one on which the country would feel the greatest anxiety, as by the way in which it would be answered the economy of the gentlemen opposite would be put to the test. It required no trifling explanation to show why the foreign dock-yards had increased 4,000*l.* in expense since 1814, and why the increased expenditure of the home yards was more than double that sum in the same period. By the estimates which were before the House, there was an apparent decrease of 11,000*l.* in the victualling department; but if the expenses which were necessarily to cease, and which really had ceased with the war in that department, were to be taken into consideration, this great saving, which was so much talked of, would appear to be no more than 340*l.* In like manner the boasted savings in the Admiralty, when judged by the same rule, would be found to amount to no more than 923*l.* So that in fact, the whole result of this economy which had been talked of on the other side, was that a saving of 1200*l.* had been made to the public—in other words, that the public were 1200*l.* richer in those departments by being at peace than they would be by continuing at war [Hear, hear!]. But leaving out this saving, what was the fact with regard to the other heads to which he alluded? Why, that an increase of expense had taken place in the first year of peace more by 21,604*l.* than was deemed necessary in time of war. So that his majesty's ministers, by dint of economy, had made their navy estimates in these departments for the first year of peace exceed those of the last year of war by 21,604*l.*; and giving them credit for the saving by 1200*l.* in the admiralty and victualling departments, there still remained an excess of 20,000*l.*, as compared with the expenditure of 1814 [Hear, hear!]

He would ask whether it was necessary for him to say one word more on this subject? He had, he hoped, clearly pointed out to the House that there was a gross excess of expenditure in time of peace, above what had been in time of war; and it was for the House to inquire into the cause of that excess, and the necessity which existed for it. He might be in error in some of the statements which he had made, with regard to figures; he might not have precisely calculated the amount of the excess. But he would ask the House, and would submit it to the House and the country, whether he had not made out a case of gross and palpable excess in the public expenditure—? an excess which required a decisive explanation from the hon. baronet opposite. The statement which he had made, was one which could not be ansewered by mere argument alone. Facts, positive and clear facts, could alone be brought against it, not to refute it, for it could not be denied, but facts which would prove that the excess which he had noticed was necessary or consistent with that economy, of the practice of which so much had been said on the other side of the House. If the hon. baronet wished to satisfy the House and the country on the subject, he would get up and answer his statement, figure by figure. The hon. baronet might attempt to do this, and still not give a satisfactory explanation. Even the noble lord himself (Castlereagh) might make one of his longest speeches without adducing any one well-founded argument in support of this excess [Hear! and a laugh]. He had thus shown to the House, under general heads, that they were now called upon to vote 20,000*l.* more in time of peace than they had been asked for in time of war. In this statement he had not gone into very minute details, and if he had been at all minute in the examination, it was with considerable pain to himself. He might be met by gentlemen on the other side with the old plea which had been so often urged since the opening of the present session. He might be told that the several estimates had more a reference to a state of war than to a time of peace—that they were not to be considered as permanent establishments which the House were then called upon to vote, but that they would be reduced in a short time. This he conceived to be no answer. The necessity of keeping up a war establishment could not now be adduced in support of an expense which he had shown to be greater than when the country was really at war. The country was now at peace, but if the argument which would go to justify the present excess were well founded, he should only say that the country would gain by being at war. It would save 20,000*l.* in those estimates, and would have saved 100,000*l.* including the expense of the illuminations for the peace [Hear, hear! and a laugh].

After the statement which he had made to the House, he was at a loss what course to take. If he wished to have the estimates returned with an address to the Prince Regent to have them reconsidered, it might be said that his royal highness had still the same persons to advise him who first recommended the estimates, and that they would give the same opinion as to their necessity. But to this he should answer, that if the army estimates had been sent back with an address of the House to have them reconsidered, they would have been so. The noble lord who now so strenuously insisted on the necessity of every man of the number which had been voted, would have assumed a different tone, and have found means of dispensing with a smaller number, if a vote of the House had decided in favour of the reconsideration of the estimates. Like his right hon. friend, the chancellor of the exchequer, who so strongly and perseveringly insisted on the expediency of the property tax, and urged it as a measure with which he was ready to stand or fall, a measure which was absolutely indispensable, yet, who the moment it was negatived by a majority of the House, declared he could find out other modes of taxation. Like him, the noble lord would, if pressed by a vote of the House, and had the alternative of either losing his place, or reconsidering the estimates, have come down and said, " Since you do so press upon me, my good friends, those estimates shall be reconsidered," and in fact so they would. If the House by such a vote, as that he (Mr. T.) had described, had insisted on the necessity of reduction, reduction would have taken place; but they might depend upon it, that if they did not interfere, the ministers themselves would never come forward with such a measure. If a vote of the House should be come to, expressive of their wish to have the estimates reconsidered, it would be seen that in less than a week they would come back again considerably reduced, and as different from their former shape as light from darkness [Hear, hear!]. The ministers, without this vote would urge the plea, that they had made arrangements which could not now be broken. They had indeed made arrangements, and they had delayed the sitting of parliament to the unusually late period at which it opened, in order to do so! They had engaged their clerks and other officers at large salaries, and then they said to parliament—" You cannot alter this arrangement, without throwing so many useful public servants out of employment, without any provision for themselves or their families—you cannot now break those engagements which have been made." But it was necessary that those arrangements should be altered—it was necessary that the public money should be saved in every possible way, and that an economy which those arrangements did not contemplate should be strictly adhered to. He thought that one way by which this could be effected would be, by giving a negative to the estimates, with a view to their being withdrawn for reconsideration, and he should make a motion to that effect, if he were not deterred by the decision which had been come to on the army estimates. At the same time he conceived that if such a measure were not adopted, nothing could be done towards reduction when the House went into a committee. Gentlemen would then be divided in their opinions as to the different modes of reduction, and the different items in which it should be made. For instance, in the admiralty some would think five clerks were necessary, others would be of opinion that three would be sufficient, and so on; there would not be a sufficient number so well agreed on any one plan as to produce any material reduction in the whole. But this would be obviated by giving a negative in the present instance to the estimates altogether, and then they would be taken back and reduced. There was no other mode which the House could so effectually adopt, and he called upon them to do so, seeing, as they must, the total disregard to economy which was had, and the enormous excess to which every expenditure was carried on the part of ministers. If the House should say to ministers, " These estimates are two large for a time of peace, they are two extravagant for the present state of the country: take them back and reconsider them, for it was your duty to have sent proper estimates in the first instance." If such should be the language of the House, the country would soon feel its beneficial effects; for the estimates would be withdrawn and reduced. He knew of no other way by which it could be effected. But if there was, he did not object to any particular manner in which this might be done; and if the hon. member near him (Mr. Bankes), whose vote on a former occasion he (Mr. T.) regretted, could point out any way in which this might be done, he would not object to it. There was decidedly a majority of the House in favour of economy, and who were disposed to approve of any measure by which it could be brought about. Under these circumstances it was the duty of members to consider whether an excess of 20,000*l.* in time of peace over what was borne in time of war, was not a subject which required the most serious deliberation [Loud cries of Hear, hear!].

Sir *George Warrender* expressed his inability to follow the ingenuous statement which had been made by the right hon. gentleman who had just sat down. But that right hon. gentleman, with an ingenuity which he possessed on every subject, had not, in his opinion, laid the matter fairly before the House. The House should recollect, that the estimates on which the right hon. gentleman had commented so ingeniously, were not proposed as the permanent peace establishment, and that many of them, from the arrangements which were at present in progress, would be greatly diminished before the end of this year. It was not fair therefore to include them in a view of the establishment as proposed even for one year. Neither was it fair to make so great a distinction between the civil and the war department, when the great increase in the sum proposed for the former arose out of the conclusion of the war, and the necessity for winding up the accounts, and bringing every thing to the proper basis of the peace. This increase in the expense of the civil department as connected with the navy, would not be thought very great, when the number of ships yet afloat and to be paid off was taken into consideration. The ordinary of the navy was always more expensive in the first year of peace than in time of war, and the number of clerks proportionably greater, in consequence of the ships daily arriving and delivering up their stores. He should not go very far back to compare the proposed estimates with those of former periods, but should compare them with those which had been voted last year, and from that comparison the House would see what reductions had been made, and what were in contemplation, and would be made in the course of the year. —The hon. baronet then went into a statement of the several items of the estimates as compared with those of last year. In the Admiralty there was a saving of 4000*l.* In the home dock-yards there had been no reduction on account of the number of ships which were daily coming home, and on this account the civil establishments of those places were so expensive, but this was an expense which could not be considered as permanent. There were only two modes of reducing the expenses in these yards. The first was a reduction of the number of workmen, of which the service did not admit at present. The second a reduction of the working hours, which would still require the same expense in overseers and clerks. In the foreign yards there had yet been no reduction, but a considerable one was in contemplation. The yards at Madras and Bombay would be greatly reduced, and orders had been sent out for that purpose. In the Mediterranean and Malta there was a reduction of 4000*l.* In the West India islands, particularly in Antigua, Jamaica, Bermuda, and Demerara, there would be such a reduction as was consistent with the safety of those places. To a question across the table from Mr. Tierney, as to the probable amount of the reduction in those places, the hon. baronet replied that he was at present unable to state the precise amount.—With regard to the victualling department, no reduction could be effected immediately. The business of these establishments was rather increased than diminished by the first year of peace. The establishment would be reduced, although not in the present year, as the number of clerks, who could not obtain superannuations, and who must be provided for in some other way, were a burthen which could not immediately be removed. There had been a great reduction of clerks in the admiralty, creating a saving of 5,100*l.* The numbers formerly were, 10 of the first class, now reduced to 8; 12 of the second class, now reduced to 7; 30 of the third class, now reduced to 13: amounting in all to 52; and now reduced to 28. The peace had of course increased one item of our expense to a great extent, namely, the charge for ships in ordinary. The increase under this head by the peace amounted to 142,000*l.* With regard to the increase in the salaries of the clerks, he hoped, when the subject came to be considered by the House, that it would approve and sanction what his majesty's ministers had recommended, being well satisfied of its necessity and expediency. The rise had taken place on the eve of a peace, but it had been in contemplation for more than three years. It was thought their former income was too small to constitute a fair remuneration for their active and laborious employments. The half pay was of course beyond former example, from the duration and extensive nature of the war. The half pay estimate amounted to 1,019,755*l.* In the year 1796, after the American war, this head of expenditure was only 93,000*l.* At the close of such a war, the expenses of repairs might have been anticipated to amount to a large sum, and this was actually the case. At the end of the American war the sum voted was 200,000*l.*; the estimate on the table under the same head amounted to 535,589*l.* There was one view of the subject of building and repairing our navy that could not but give satisfaction to the House—he meant the transference of this work from the mercantile dock yards to the national. At the end of the American war there were twenty-eight sail of the line and fifty-four frigates building or refitting in the docks belonging to merchants; at present there was only one small sixth-rate, and there would be no necessity of resorting to this mode of increasing or repairing our ships of war in future. He apprehended that the establishment at Sheerness had already received the sanction of the House, inasmuch as it was admitted to be necessary that ten sail of the line should receive their stores from that harbour. At Plymouth, also, considerable sums were required by the store-houses, which were more necessary in time of peace than of war, from the frequent return of ships to be supplied.—The hon. baronet, after restating some of his remarks on the importance of the establishment at Bermuda, concluded by observing that the whole expense proposed for the naval service of the present year was 7,147,000*l.* The House was already apprized that it was intended to transfer the business of the transport-board to the navy-office, although the settlement of old arrears had retarded the accomplishment of that object. Upon the whole, he felt that he had described, in a very inadequate manner, this outline of the public naval service; but he could assure the House that it was the disposition of the admiralty to carry into effect every retrenchment of expenditure consistent with the security of the country. Inquiries were in progress into every department—every further practicable reduction was in contemplation—and no doubt considerable reductions might be expected to take place. He had only to add, that he trusted he should be able to state these different points more clearly in the committee.

Mr. *R. Gordon* had heard with great pleasure of the economical disposition of the board of admiralty, but at the same time considered it to be his duty to show that the present estimates ought to be materially reduced. When he compared the proposed establishment with that of 1802, he observed that the chief clerk had 1050*l.* a-year, although the commissioners of naval inquiry had declared that 800*l.* was a sufficient remuneration. They recommended an addition of 120*l.* in time of war; but here was an increase of 250*l.* in time of peace. One assistant clerk, who formerly received 50*l.*, now received 100*l.* per annum. These sums might appear trifling when considered separately; but, considered in the aggregate, they swelled into importance. The salary of the paymaster of widows' and orphans' pensions had been augmented from 200*l.* to 600*l.* a year; that of the inspector of telegraphs from 300*l.* to 500*l.* He presumed, from the last item, that it was intended still to keep up the telegraph establishment [Here sir G. Warrender said across the table, that the telegraphs were to be done away, and that the inspector's office was only to continue for a short time]. He thought it, then, hardly fair to the House to require it to vote the charge for the whole year. He observed, that there was likewise an item for six messengers, two at 280*l.* and four at 150*l.* per annum each. Here there was a correspondent rise of allowance, as compared with the estimates of 1802. The same principle of progressive increase might be traced to the minutest charges; for instance, there was an allowance of 20*l.* to the barge-master, whereas it never before exceeded 6*l.* He mentioned these things chiefly for the purpose of showing that the practice prevailed universally of raising the amount of all salaries to public servants. The sum of 10,000*l.* appeared to him to be a very large sum for law charges; but he was quite at a loss to understand why the office of paymaster of the marines was not transferred to the general treasurership of the navy. This constituted a charge of 2,340*l.* which was about 12*s.* a man for the trouble of paying them. The vacant office of deputy-comptroller of the navy would, he presumed, be abolished; but why, he wished to ask, was the country to be burthened with three surveyors, when during the war it had but two? He would point out a few other instances of the same lavish and uncessary expenditure. The receiver of fees and paymaster of contingencies, instead of 300*l.*, now received 400*l.*: the registrar of public securities was altogether a newly created office: three draftsmen of public buildings had now 1,150*l.* an increase of 400*l.* upon their former salaries. If he turned his attention to the different yards, he perceived that at Portsmouth the charge for this year was 60,000*l.* In 1813 it was 45,000*l.*, and in 1802 it was 15,000*l.* [Hear, hear!] The expense of foreign yards was 57,462*l.* and for the out-ports 6,791. In the year 1802 the two items together amounted only to 13,000*l.* and yet the peace of Amiens was deemed an insecure peace—a peace made with republican France; whereas we were now at peace with France restored to the legitimate government of the Bourbons. All these circumstances, to avoid going into any further detail, seemed to him to furnish a strong case which might admit, but certainly demanded explanation. All the votes of that House would be useless, unless the necessity of practical retrenchment was perpetually pressed upon the attention of government.

Sir *Joseph Yorke* considered that the arguments of the right hon. gentleman, who had spoken first would be unanswerable, if applied to the year 1820 instead of the year 1816. His opinion certainly was, that ministers would not deserve the confidence of the country if they did not adopt every practicable measure of economy; but the period of 1802 was not a fair test by which to judge of the present establishment. It was too low at that time, and the peace was a short and miserable one. He would wish the House to recollect the distress to which so many gentlemen must be reduced, by being turned adrift upon the world [A laugh]. For his own part, this appeared to him a powerful consideration, nor had he heard any thing against it but noise and nonsense. He believed he could assure the right hon. gentleman who had contrived, with a good deal of ingenuity, to turn his hon. friend's flank, that the establishments in the East Indies, at Trincomalee, Bombay, and Madras, would be immediately reduced, particularly at the two latter settlements. Gibraltar was likewise to be reduced; and if that at Malta was still to be maintained, he apprehended it could not be desired on the other side that we should abandon all our naval stations in the Mediterranean. With respect to the force at Bermuda, it formed the great security of Canada, and was a point from which a British fleet might sweep the whole extent of the coast of North America. He deprecated any renewal of hostilities with America in his time; but it was impossible that the House should shut its eyes to the growing and gigantic strength of her naval power. She was no longer to be contended against by bumboat expeditions; her three-deckers now sailed upon fresh water, and he would appeal to a gallant admiral (Markham) whether it was any thing better than pinchbeck economy to keep down this branch of the service [A laugh]. He thought, that too much stress had been laid on the salaries of the clerks. If the first clerk received 150*l.* a year more than any lord of the admiralty, he had been 36 years in the office, and his conduct such as to merit the respect and gratitude of his country. Supposing that the pay branch was done away by being turned over to the general department of the navy, it perhaps was questionable whether this alteration would produce any saving to the public [Hear, hear!]. Gentlemen might cheer him; he was not affected by that; for he knew they always cheered an honest man [A laugh]. Mr. Sippings, the third surveyor, had received the approbation of lord St. Vincent, and this was saying a great deal. He would, like his right hon. friend the treasurer of the navy, lay his hand upon his heart, and vow to God [a loud laugh] that he believed there was no foundation for the charge of extravagance brought against his majesty's ministers on this subject. Why should there be but two surveyors? Were they to keep watch and watch; and if they were, what was to be done if the one should be seized with a fit of apoplexy, and the other be knocked down by a flash of lightning? The place of registrar of public securities had been condemned because it was a new office, but it was an office which had always been necessary, and for want of it the public had been peppered and bedevilled in all weathers [A laugh]. He must confess he had been twenty-six years a member of that House, and, in spite of all his efforts, he had not been able to make himself master of parliamentary phraseology; but what he meant was, that for the want of an officer at 4 or 500*l.* a year, the country ought not to be diddled out of its money or securities [A laugh]. As for the assistant draftsmen, they were persons of scientific acquirements, and men who devoted a great portion of their time to the service of the public. The poor-rates had also greatly increased, particularly in the neighbourhood of the naval arsenals, and had increased the burthens of all persons residing in those situations. He might safely refer to the intelligent mind of the right hon. gentleman himself, whether the plan of building only in the King's yards must not ultimately produce a large saving

That was the system now acted on; and, upon the whole, he would appeal to the country gentlemen in the House, and to every man, either in office, or who wished to get into office, whether it was possible at Lady-day 1816, to cut down the naval establishment to that of the dearly-beloved period of 1802. A few thousand pounds might be cut down that very month, but any great saving could not be looked for till the end of the year.

Admiral *Markham* felt himself called on, from some observations in the speech of the honourable gentleman who spoke last—a speech more full of jocularity than arguments,—to say something respecting the Pinchbeck administration alluded to—he meant that of earl St. Vincent. It was hardly necessary for him to enlarge on the great qualifications possessed by that extraordinary man—it was hardly necessary for him to call the attention of the House to the length or the value of his services—and if the hon. gentleman had nothing to urge against the arguments for a reduction of the lavish expenditure proposed by his majesty's ministers but the ridicule which he had thrown on the economy practised under the naval administration of that gallant lord, he had better have kept his peace and not said a word. He congratulated the House and the country that one great plan of the noble earl alluded to, the building ships in the royal dockyards, had at length been adopted. That was a point which had formerly been much laboured in that House, and for which the administration to which the pinchbeck admiralty belonged, had been much vilified. Yet the present administration were now taking credit for this plan, and ridiculing all the while those whom in this respect they were merely following. He objected to the great sum which was to be expended in new works, and especially the sum which was to be laid out on Pater yard, in Milford Haven. There had been before a yard in Milford Haven, for building only, but now it seemed the intention to make a yard there for repairing also. He protested against the establishment of any yard at all, in that harbour. What recommendations it had even for a building yard, he could not imagine. The country around it produced no timber. The nearest place from whence timber was brought, was the river Wye, and as it was necessary to ship it, the expense would not be increased by carrying it round the Land's End to Plymouth. It was, besides, necessary to carry to Milford, sails, cordage, copper, iron, and all other articles, which enhanced the charge of repairs, and it was, besides, one of the worst points for ships to make in the Irish Channel. He also thought it very injudicious to expend large sums on the yards in the rivers Thames and Medway, because the depth of water continued to diminish in those rivers. The sums which it was now proposed to expend on Chatham, Woolwich, and Deptford, and the new yard at Pater, would go far towards the building a new yard at Northfleet. He did not mean to object to the keeping the old yards in the river in repair, but it was most improvident to make any additions to them. In the foreign yards the reductions had not been made which were customary on the return of peace. During the peace of 1802, there had been no commissioner at Antigua, or Nova Scotia. The military department of the navy, he considered a neglected and oppressed service, in comparison with the army. The admirals had been deprived of the prize money, which they had formerly received, without any compensation. He did not know how it was possible, that an admiral should now on some stations, the West Indies for instance, keep up a table like an admiral, or even like a warrant officer. An instance of the different treatment of the army and navy, was to be seen at St. Helena; admiral Cockburn was sent there—with an allowance somewhat increased to be sure—but sir Hudson Lowe had twelve thousand pounds a year. And no one could deny that admiral Cockburn's situation was by far the most disagreeable. Sir Hudson Lowe was shut up in the island only, but admiral Cockburn was shut up in a box—for the cabin of a man of war was nothing better. When officers of the army abroad drew for their pay, they were paid in solid coin the full amount, in any quarter of the globe, but the naval officer was subject to lose on the rate of exchange. He did not wish that the country should at this time be put to any new expense, but at least both the services should be put on the fame footing; especially as they had borne all their hardships during war without a murmur. The naval officers were obliged, when they took their half-pay, to take an oath that they enjoyed no other place or emolument under government. The officers of the army took no such oath [Yes, they do!

from the ministerial side of the House]. At any rate, military officers to his knowledge had enjoyed their half-pay, and at the same time received the full allowances of governors of fortresses. He had been once inclined to think it hard that no half-pay was allowed to master's mates and midshipmen, but upon mature consideration he found that subject attended with many difficulties; for if half-pay were allowed to these officers, the navy might be filled with persons who entered with other motives than a love to the service, and who would not be likely to form Nelsons and St. Vincents. After enjoying their half-pay for years on shore, it might be found that they would not be able or willing to serve the country. He saw no reason, however, why wounded officers in the navy should not be put on the same footing as those in the army, with respect to pensions.

Mr. *Croker* said, he should not follow the gallant admiral who had last spoken, into the details of his clear, and for the most part candid speech, because when they came into the committee, he should be ready and willing, and anxious to meet him in that branch of the discussion; but for the present he should turn his attention to the speech of the right hon. gentleman who opened the debate. That speech, like most of the speeches of the same right hon. gentleman, was ingenious and forcible, but like too many of his speeches, it was destitute of foundation. The right hon. gentleman affected great earnestness, and appeared to feel really convinced of the force of his argument; but this could be only an appearance, for the right hon. gentleman must be too well acquainted with the subject on which he was speaking, to suppose that he stood on solid grounds. The short issue of that right hon. gentleman's speech was, that in the first year of peace there was an increase on the ordinary estimates of the navy of 20,000*l.* and that this was a *primâ facie* ground for sending back the estimates without even going into the committee. Now the right hon. gentleman could hardly be ignorant that in the first year of every peace upon record, the ordinary estimates of the navy had exceeded those of the last year of war preceding; and the reason of this was plain, because the ordinary estimates comprised the civil department of the navy; and as the scattered materials were in time of peace brought back to the offices and dock-yards, the expense of those establishments was consequently increased. To prove what he had asserted, he should give a statement of the ordinary estimates in the last years of war and the first years of peace, from the treaty of Utrecht to the present time. In the year 1714, the first year of peace after that treaty, the increase on the navy ordinaries was 28,000*l.* It would be necessary, that the amount of this increase might be clearly understood, that he should state the proportion which the increase and decrease at different times bore to the whole amount of the establishments, and it would be seen in the course of the statement which he should exhibit, that not only had the ordinary estimates of the navy increased regularly in the first year of every peace, but that they had as regularly decreased in the first year of every war. In 1714, then, the increase of that year, being the first year of peace, was, as he had just stated, 28,000*l.* being 3-20ths of the whole estimates. In 1739, the last year of peace, the expense was 220,000*l.*: in 1740, the first year of war, it was 190,000*l.*, having fallen 2-20ths—in 1748, the last year of war, it was 208,000*l.*; in 1749, the first year of peace, it was 285,000*l.*, being an increase of 77,000*l.* or 7-20ths—in 1755, the last year of peace, the ordinary estimate was 280,000*l.*; in 1756, the first year of war, 216,000*l.* being a decrease of 4-20ths—in 1762, the last year of the war, it was 272,000*l.*; in the first year of peace (1763) it rose to 380,000*l.*, being an increase of 8-20ths, or 108,000*l.*; in 1775, the year before the American war, it was 444,000*l.*; in 1776, the first year of the war, it fell to 426,000*l.* being a decrease of 1-20th—in 1783, the last year of that war, it was 451,000*l.*; in the first year of the peace (1784) it was 701,000*l.* being an increase of 250,000*l.* or 11-20ths of the whole estimate [Hear, hear!]—in 1792, the last year of peace, it was 672,000*l.*; in 1793, it was 669,000*l.*, a trifling diminution indeed, but which showed their tendency to fall at the commencement of the war; in 1801–2, the last year of the war, it was 1,058,000*l.*; in 1802–3, the year of peace, it rose to 1,228,000*l.* being an increase of 3-20ths; and if the sum added in that first year of peace to the navy debt be taken into the account, as it ought to be, it would make the increase in that very year, to which honourable gentlemen were so fond of referring, 10-20ths, or one-half of the whole estimate. [Hear, hear!]—In 1804, the first year of war, the estimate had fallen to 1,058,000*l.*, being a decrease of 3-20ths. The ordinary of the navy in the last year was 2,348,000*l.* In the present year it was proposed that it should be 2,765,000*l.* being an increase of only 4-20ths of the whole estimate. Now, this was a smaller increase on the commencement of peace than any former estimates which could be referred to.—He had thus, he trusted, got rid of the *primâ facie* case, of which so much had been said. But he did not wish it to be supposed, that if the House went into a committee he should be contented with such general statements. He entreated the House to go into that committee, and as he had endeavoured to answer the general reasoning of the right hon. gentleman, he should then prove the propriety of the details. The right hon. gentleman had requested to be answered by figures—in that at least he had satisfied him. The right hon. gentleman had chosen his own weapons and ground, and yet he believed it would be admitted that he was wholly defeated. But it might be said, that the sums which he had given were the whole of the estimates, whereas the speech of the right hon. gentleman was confined to the civil establishments. But, in taking the whole estimates together, he (Mr. Croker) had probably done injustice to his cause; for as there never had been so large half-pay allowances and pensions at any former period of peace, the account might have been more in his favour if these items were deducted. But in narrowing the subject to the narrowest view the right hon. gentleman could take of that subject, the civil offices and dock-yards, he would say, that in one hundred years no instance could be found in which the peace estimates in these departments had been less than those of the last years of war. A minute difference might indeed have escaped his observation in so voluminous a search as through the estimates of a century; but he had examined them with the best diligence he was master of, and he believed he might confidently say, that in the very points insisted on by the right hon. gentleman no instance of a diminution would be found, and that wherever there was any difference, it was an excess of the first year of peace over the last year of war. All this was in direct contradiction of the right hon. gentleman's statement, and a reason for going into a committee, and he should there, he hoped, be able to show that the items were as far from being extravagant as the sum was from being *primâ facie* objectionable; and that some of those which looked most like extravagant to the gentlemen opposite, were in reality most economical, and were sanctioned not only by reason, but by the votes and resolutions of that House [Loud cries of Hear, hear!].

Mr. *Baring* said, that the grave speech of one lord of the admiralty, and the facetious speech of another, had done but little to convince the House of the propriety of the enormous estimates which had been laid before them. The hon. secretary, too, whom they had just heard, had confined himself to points which had not been disputed, and had brought forward many figures without at all advancing his argument. As the hon. secretary had expressed his wish for a *primâ facie* case, he would treat him with one. It was this, that the victualling money had been raised from 1*s.* 4*d.* per head in war to 1*s.* 6*d.* He was confident that by any navy contract at least 6*d.* per head might have been saved. A local case of extravagance had been stated to him on the best authority. It was this, that the master of the quarantine at Milford Haven, whose salary was 200*l.* a year, had in October last received an increase of fifty guineas. He had also the perquisite allowed him of victualling his men at 1*s.* 4*d.* per head per day. He had learned that since last autumn the allowance had been raised to 1*s.* 6*d.* The real expense of victualling these men could not be more than 1*s.* per day in Wales; and here, then, on the number of men under his direction, a perquisite of 1000*l.* a year was thrown into the hands of the quarantine master, which, in addition to his pay, would make his place worth 1500*l.* a year. Was this person a man who had distinguished himself in the navy? No, instead of that, he understood he had been the master of a collier. This was a most flagrant waste of the public money, and a gross breach of public duty on the part of the admiralty to permit it. His idea was, that the estimates should be sent back to ministers for reconsideration, and the rather as they were made so far back as in January last. Something had been said of building in merchants' yards; but he would ask, what had become of the Cydnus and Eurotas frigates, that were built in the king's yard only so lately as 1813? He was told they were broken up for fire-wood; therefore he was led to conclude that there must be some great defect in this branch of the service.

Mr. *Robinson* maintained, that the hon. gentleman who spoke last was quite as unfortunate in his *primâ facie* cases as his right hon. friend beside him, whom the hon. gentleman seemed willing to leave in the lurch. For the fact was, that the admiralty had no connexion with the case mentioned at Milford Haven; nor was that case included in the estimates upon the table. Blame might attach to the department under which this master of quarantine acted, but the admiralty had nothing to do with him. So much as to one of the hon. gentleman's *primâ facie* cases, and now as to the other, it turned out most unluckily for the hon. gentleman's information, that the Cydnus and the Eurotas were not built in the king's, but in the merchants' yards.

Mr. *Baring* contended, that the advance in the rate of victualling men, upon which he had animadverted, and which furnished a strong *primâ facie* case against the admiralty, was to be found in the estimates upon the table. Then as to the Cydnus and Eurotas frigates, it might be, that he was misinformed as to the place in which they were built; but whether constructed in the merchants', or the king's yards, it was evident, that the admiralty had neglected its duty, for it was its province to take care, that these frigates should be properly constructed, and of the best materials. So that the inaccuracy of his information, was no acquittal of the admiralty, from the charge which the undeniable condition of these frigates involved.

Mr. *Wynn* thought, that as it appeared from the statement of the gentlemen opposite that a material reduction of expense in the naval department was to be expected within the year, the estimates before the House should not be voted for more than six months, that was until June next. Thus the House, instead of trusting to promises of economy, would retain the means of enforcing its observance, which would be a much better mode of doing its duty towards the country than by voting from confidence in any ministers a larger sum of money than was actually necessary, and the gentlemen opposite themselves stated that the sum mentioned in the estimates was not at all likely to be required for the expenditure of the year.

Mr. *Tierney* justified his former statements, which he contended were in no degree shaken by the speech of the secretary of the admiralty. For his *primâ facie* case still remained unanswered, namely, that the sum of 2,765,000*l.* required by the estimates for the expenditure of the ordinary of the navy was not fairly accounted for, and that it was unwarrantable to advance the salaries of the civil officers of the navy, of the secretaries of the admiralty for instance, upon the conclusion of peace, when the duties of those officers must be so considerably reduced; that it was not just to give to those officers, a larger salary in peace, when we had but few ships at sea, than they had when our ships covered the ocean [Here there were cries of Spoke! spoke! when Mr. Freemantle rose and moved an adjournment, and thus a new question being before the House, Mr. Tierney acquired a right to speak again, and proceeded]. He challenged the hon. secretary to an examination of the several items of the estimates, and by voting for the adjournment the hon. secretary would, as well as himself, have a better opportunity of collecting more complete information. But if it were the fact, as the hon. secretary assumed, that the labour of the officers connected with the admiralty was greater in peace than in war, how came it that those salaries should have been heretofore so much reduced in peace? How came it, for instance, that the salary of the secretary of the admiralty himself should have been always reduced one-fourth—as it must still continue, thanks to the decision of that House? But looking to all the official departments connected with the admiralty, he would ask, in which of them could any augmentation of labour be expected during peace? For instance, how could the navy pay office after we had been now six months at peace, have more trouble than when we had above 100,000 seamen to pay? At present we had only 33,000 seamen to pay, and yet the salaries of this office were augmented. The same question might be put with respect to the victualling office and the dock yards. Some increase of business might be looked for in the dock yards of Woolwich and Deptford for a short time, in consequence of the shipping to be paid off; but surely no increase of trouble could be said to take place elsewhere. But the most extraordinary part of the hon. secretary's speech, in which he endeavoured to make an ingenious run out of a bad case, and in which he contrived to get a great shout after him, was in the assertion that an increase had uniformly taken place in the ordinary of the navy upon the conclusion of every peace since the treaty of Utrecht. This assertion Mr. Tierney maintained to be quite absurd, and said, that no precedent could be found for the extraordinary proposition which those estimates contained, for increasing the salaries of public offices at the very moment when their business was materially diminished, and the prices of all articles materially reduced.

Mr. *Croker* remarked that the right hon. gentleman had said, that he (Mr. C.) had retreated behind his own fire, but he would say that the right hon. gentleman had contrived to retreat behind his own smoke. [Hear, hear!] The right hon. gentleman had been so good as to compliment him for ingenuity, while in the same breath he charged him with folly, by attributing to him a statement which he never made. He had called on him (Mr. Croker) to prove his case item by item, and yet declared his intention of voting against going into the committee, the only place in which he could prove it. The right hon. gentleman had totally misrepresented his speech by stating, that he had argued that no reduction ought to take place in the first year of peace; he had said and he thought no such thing. He admitted that some reductions ought, and he knew even that they had already taken place, but it was only in the committee that those reductions could be stated and explained: differences of opinion on the details of so voluminous a subject would necessarily arise, but it was only in a committee they could be discussed. He was ready to go through the detail item by item. He hoped that the great mass of the estimates would be found fit for the sanction of parliament, but if any item should appear objectionable, he had shown in his own case the disposition to bow with becoming respect to the judgment of any great body of that House.

The motion of adjournment was negatived, and that for the committee carried; but on the motion of lord Castlereagh the committee was postponed until Wednesday.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday, March 26.

BILL FOR NATURALIZING THE PRINCE OF COBOURG.] The Earl of *Liverpool* presented a bill for allowing a bill to be presented in this present session of parliament, for Naturalizing Prince Leopold of Cobourg. His lordship stated that this bill was necessary as a preliminary step to the naturalization of his serene highness. It had been usual to go through the different stages of bills of this description in one day, and therefore he proposed that certain of the standing orders should be suspended to-morrow for that purpose.—The bill being read a first time,

Lord *Holland* suggested, that the regular course would be to move that the standing order alluded to be taken into consideration to-morrow.

The Earl of Liverpool acquiesced, and a motion to that effect was agreed to.

PUBLIC ECONOMY.] The Earl of Coventry presented a petition from the nobility, gentry, clergy, freeholders, and inhabitants of the county of Worcester, praying for economy in the public expenditure, and retrenchment of unnecessary establishments.

The Earl of *Lauderdale* expressed his concurrence in the sentiments of the petitioners, and adverted to an item of public expenditure which usually came up to the House two or three days only before the close of the session, when there was no time to make inquiry, namely, an annual grant of 50,000*l.* for the Caledonian canal, which canal, he believed it was the opinion of navel men, would never prove of any utility, and which, it was the universal opinion in Scotland, was of no use whatever. He therefore thought that a saving to this amount might at all events be made, and which, in these times of difficulty and pressure, would be of some importance. He trusted that an inquiry would be instituted upon this subject, in order that this money might not again be voted for no useful purpose.

The Duke of *Sussex* presented a petition from the lord mayor, aldermen, and commons of London, in common council assembled, praying for economy in the public expenditure, and retrenchment of useless offices, and particularly praying against the large military establishment now proposed. His royal highness observed, that the people had a right to expect the strictest economy in the public expenditure, at a period like the present of pressure and difficulty. He could not, however, upon this subject, add to what had been so ably said upon a former night by a noble marquis; he could only recur to a topic he had mentioned before, he alluded to the marines. By the establishment of a force of that description, in preference to battalions of the line, a considerable saving might be effected, as it would be found that 16,000 marines would cost the country 60,000*l.* a year less than 16,000 men forming a standing army, reckoning 1000 men to a battalion.

Ordered to lie on the table.

READING CLERK OF THE HOUSE.] The *Lord Chancellor* read a letter from Mr. Rose, the clerk of parliament, announcing that the state of health of Mr. William Stewart Rose, the Reading Clerk, was such, that there was no probability of his being able to attend the House, and proposing that Mr. Birch should be allowed to officiate in his stead, whom he stated to be well qualified for the duties of the situation, having attended the House in that capacity for two sessions on a former occasion. His lordship said he had no recollection of the merits of Mr. Birch, but he thought it of importance that he should only be appointed to officiate during the pleasure of the House, and that he should not be removed from the situation without the pleasure of the House, and he moved to that effect, after speaking very highly of the services of Mr. Cowper, and mentioning the necessity there was that that gentleman should have efficient assistance, and also warmly praising the conduct of Mr. Currie, who had officiated as reading clerk.

The Earl of *Lauderdale* remarked upon the fact, that a clerk of their lordships House might be removed at the pleasure of the clerk of parliament, who was a member of the other House. He agreed that the gentleman now to be admitted to act for Mr. Stewart Rose ought not to be removed without their lordships permission. All their lordships must be well aware of the distinguished ability and attention with which the senior clerk performed his duties; but the state of public business in their lordships House was such, that it was highly proper that he should have, not only this, but still further assistance; for the country was not reduced to such poverty as not to be able to provide for the public service in this particular; and he gave notice, that he would, next week, bring the matter more particularly under their lordships view.

Lord *Redesdale* agreed in all that had been said as to the distinguished manner in which the senior clerk had done his duty, and as to the necessity of effectual assistance. From the knowledge he had of Mr. Birch, he believed he was competent.

Lord *Holland* said, that if an additional clerk should be found necessary, he ought to be paid by the clerk of parliament and not by the public, the clerk being bound to perform the duties by himself or his deputies.

The Earl of *Lauderdale* said, the patent ran, that the clerk of the parliament should either attend in person or provide a sufficient deputy or deputies; but rather than interfere with vested rights, if a different construction were put upon the patent, he thought the expense of whatever additional assistance should be considered necessary must be borne by the public, as he could not admit the country to be so reduced as to be unable to pay for necessary assistance in the conducting of business of so much importance.

The motion was agreed to.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, March 26.

OFFENDERS TRANSPORTATION BILL.] Mr. *Addington* moved for leave to bring in a bill, to amend the several laws relative to the Transportation of Offenders. This measure he said, he should have brought forward sooner, if he were not in hopes of being able to frame a bill for consolidating all the acts upon the subject of transportation, from that of George 1st, downwards. But this consolidation being found impracticable, it became necessary to provide for the continuance of the act of last session, which would expire on the 1st of May, some omissions in which it was intended to supply. It was also meant to introduce a clause for providing inspectors, at the ports to which the transports are usually sent for embarkation, such inspectors to act intermediately between the gaolers, or persons bringing transports, and the commanders of the vessels in which such transports were to proceed to their destination.

Mr. *Bennet* expressed a hope, that this measure would not be hurried through the House, but that ample time would be afforded for the consideration of the important subject, to which it referred. Upon this subject it was known, that the highest authorities entertained an opinion, altogether adverse to the principle of transportation, and with that opinion he himself fully concurred. For in his judgment, a much better plan might be devised for the reform of convicts at home, and at a considerably cheaper rate. But the fact was, that transports were never reformed at Botany Bay, where the whole system of management was of such an opposite tendency, that the number of executions in that settlement, far exceeded the average of natural deaths. He would, however, enter more at length upon the second reading of the bill, which, he trusted, would not be proposed for some time.

Mr. *Addington* said, that he had no wish to hurry the Bill, but yet, as the hon. member objected to the principle of transportation altogether, he could not see how his purpose could derive any advantage from the delay of this measure.

Mr. *Abercrombie* observed, that although he did not agree with his hon. friend as to the expediency of abolishing transportation altogether, he thought that the system ought to be very materially modified. The learned gentleman asked, whether governor Macquarrie had yet returned any answer to the letter which, he understood, was some time since addressed to him, from the proper office, inclosing the report of a committee of that House, upon the subject of transportation to Botany Bay, and the general conduct of that colony? If such answer had been received (and he expressed a wish to have his question communicated to the under secretary of state, for the colonial department, who was not then in his place) he thought it desirable to have that answer laid before the House.

Mr. *Addington* observed, that the present act expired on the 1st of May. It was, therefore, necessary to proceed with the bill, and avoid delays that might postpone it beyond the date he had mentioned.

Mr. *Abercrombie* said, the bill was passed for a short time, to give opportunity for consideration; and now, as the holydays would soon come on, the bill, of course, could not be interrupted: but why not bring it in earlier.

Mr. *Addington* said, his reasons for not bringing it in earlier were merely, that he had devoted much time and labour to the consideration of it, with the view of consolidating the different acts of parliament; and he had found it impracticable to introduce it sooner.

Sir *M. W. Ridley* commented on the hon. gentleman's labours, which appeared to him to have been in vain. Certainly the present bill could not be intended as a permanent measure.

Mr. *Lockhart* observed, that he believed the plan for reforming offenders at home, by solitary confinement, &c. was found chimerical, as those connected with the penitentiary system could, he understood, fully testify. He himself thought, and his opinion was supported by some able writers, that it would be advisable to have convicts employed to work in the open air, which would certainly be more for the advantage of their health, and most probably tend to diminish that hostility to society, which was too often the source of vice.

Leave was given to bring in the bill, which was accordingly brought in, and read a first time.

INSOLVENT DEBTORS.] Mr. *Abercrombie* presented a petition from the Debtors confined in York gaol, stating "that they were imprisoned for debts which they were unable to pay; that their insolvency was created by the pressure of the times, and by unavoidable misfortunes; that they were ready to divide their effects among their creditors, whom they were anxious to satisfy by all the means in their power: and that under such circumstances, they heard with alarm of the introduction of a measure into that House, which they understood was calculated to deprive them of the clemency of the existing law, and to condemn them to such measure of imprisonment, as any capricious or cruel creditor might think proper to inflict. But the petitioners earnestly prayed that the House would be pleased to take their unhappy case into consideration, and save them from the visitation of such aggravated calamity, as they were led to apprehend from the measure alluded to." The learned gentleman, in presenting this petition, took occasion to express a hope, that the House and the committee to whom this subject was referred, would not, in considering the evils which might have resulted from the existing law, entertain the idea of recurring to the former system, under which such intolerable injustice, such unparalleled inhumanity, had taken place. In providing against fraudulent debtors he hoped the House, in its justice and humanity, would never overlook the case of the unfortunate debtors from whom this petition proceeded, and he much feared that such unfortunate debtors were but too numerous, especially in the present state of the country. Therefore, while he wished, as much as any man, to guard against fraud, he would never allow misfortune to become the object of punishment, and particularly of punishment as severe as any callous or thoughtless creditor was at liberty to inflict upon his debtor under the old law of debtor and creditor, to which he confidently hoped that parliament would never consent to recur.

The petition was referred to the committee appointed to consider the effects of the insolvent debtors act.

Third Secretary of State.] Mr. *Tierney*, with a view to the motion of which he had given notice, with respect to the office of the Third Secretary of State, moved, "That there be laid before this House, an account of the salaries, allowances, new year's gifts, and perquisites received in the offices of the secretaries of state for the home, foreign, and war departments, in the years ended the 5th of January 1815 and 5th of January 1816, distinguishing each year, and the different departments, and the persons by whom the salaries have been received."—Ordered.

Civil List.] Lord *Castlereagh* gave notice of his intention to propose a bill, for regulating the expenditure of the Civil List in future, in pursuance of the recommendation of the report of the committee of last session, which bill was meant to include a provision for the appointment of certain officers, to check the expenditure in the several departments. This bill, however, he did not think he should be able to bring forward until after the recess, as the estimates had been referred back to the several officers, with a view to consider what practicable reductions could be made, consistently with a due regard to the interests of the Crown, and the allowance of such an establishment as should provide against any application to parliament hereafter, for the discharge of debts. As to the present debt of 277,000*l.* upon the civil list, he was happy to say, that the payment of that sum would be provided for without any application to parliament, namely, from droits of the Crown, a considerable part of which had accrued since the discussion of this subject last session.

Mr. *Tierney* observed, that as those droits of the Crown, of which he should be glad to hear a satisfactory explanation, would be available for some other purpose, if not required for the discharge of the debts of the civil list, he could not see that that House or the public, had so much reason to rejoice as the noble lord professed to feel. But the estimates were, it appeared, referred back for the purpose of reduction—So that an after-thought had occurred to the noble lord on this subject; [A laugh, and Hear, hear!]—and he should be very glad to find, however unlooked-for, that a similar after-thought occurred to the noble lord with respect to various other departments, so that something more than the mere show or profession of economy should appear in the administration. But, it seemed, the noble lord's intended bill was in pursuance of the report of the committee of the last session, of the proceedings of which he (Mr. T.) decidedly disapproved; and he fancied that the grounds of his disapprobation would now be pretty generally acknowledged. His intention, therefore, was, to move for the appointment of a new committee, to consider the whole of the subjects referred to the committee of last session and the report of which might be made before the introduction of the noble lord's bill, which it seemed could not be brought forward until after the holydays. Thus the report of the committee which he proposed would serve to guide the judgment of the House in considering the noble lord's bill; but he (Mr. T.) thought the House must now be fully satisfied, that unless the committee which he proposed should be invested with powers to send for persons and papers the inquiry would be ineffectual.

Lord *Castlereagh* said, that he had no objection to produce an account of the droits alluded to; but with respect to the right hon. gentleman's intended motion, he thought it would be more satisfactory to the House, and to the right hon. gentleman himself, to have the views of government upon this important question made known before that motion was brought forward.

Mr. *Tierney* observed, that there was an understanding between the chancellor of the exchequer and himself, last session, that if any new excess should arise upon the civil list, the report of the committee of last session should be referred to another committee. The noble lord, in founding his bill upon the report of the committee of last session, proceeded upon the assumption of facts, which he (Mr. T.) utterly denied. The noble lord might, however, bring forward his bill as soon as he chose, while he (Mr. T.) would make his motion as soon as he chose, and if the noble lord was not on the alert he (Mr. T.) was very likely to be before him.

Mr. *Brougham* asked, whether the noble lord had any objection to produce a statement of the droits of the Crown, from the commencement of the war, together with their application and the amount of the residue. He meant merely a statement of the totals.

Lord *Castlereagh* said, he knew of no objection whatever.

SLAVE TRADE.] Mr. *Wilberforce*, referring to the negociations at Vienna, said he wished to ask the noble lord opposite a question upon the subject of the Abolition of the Slave Trade. In a paragraph of those negociations, it was agreed, that the conferences upon the question of the slave trade should not be broken up altogether then, but that the ministers of the different powers should meet again upon the subject in London or Paris. He was desirous of being informed what steps had been taken in consequence of this resolution.

Lord *Castlereagh* stated, that at the period of the conferences at Vienna, only four powers, namely, those of Russia, Austria, Prussia, and Great Britain, had agreed to abandon the slave trade altogether. France had not then gone this length. Last year, however, she had followed the example of the other powers, and consequently all became pledged to the same course. In consequence of this pledge, by command of the Prince Regent, a note had been addressed to the ministers of the four powers resident in this country, requesting that they would apply to their respective courts for instructions to hold the conference alluded to. He hoped but little delay would take place before those instructions were received, and he could assure his hon. friend, that as soon as they were received, no time should be lost on his part, in assembling, according to the stipulation at Vienna, and in laying before the House the result of their proceedings.

Mr. *W. Smith* asked, whether there was any prospect or even a glimpse of hope, that the Spanish government would be induced to concur in the abolition of the slave trade? He would not now discuss whether Spain ought or might have been induced to acquiesce in this benevolent object, but he could not help thinking that while that country persisted in this odious traffic, the endeavours of all the other powers must be nugatory.

Lord *Castlereagh* said, that no one would hail with more sincere joy than himself, the concurrence of Spain in this measure, but he was sorry to say, that the endeavours heretofore used to induce that concurrence, had been unsuccessful. Spain was pledged at Vienna to discontinue the slave trade in eight years, and to that pledge she adhered in all the discussions, which had since taken place. He felt indeed, great apprehensions that that government would not depart from this pledge. But notwithstanding that perseverance, he could not suppose it would be deemed consistent with sound policy or common sense to depart from our relations with this government with respect to other objects. That Spain might yet be induced to relax upon this point was his wish and hope, but yet, from what had already occurred, he regretted to say, that he could not hold out any expectations upon the subject.

NAVY ESTIMATES.] Mr. *Baring*, adverting to some observations which he had made on a preceding evening, with respect to the expense of victualling the men at Milford Haven, said, he wished to call the attention of the House to a subject which certainly required some satisfactory answer from ministers. He alluded to a charge which appeared in the navy estimates for the present year, for victualling the officers and ship-keepers in ordinary. The number of men so victualled was 4,857 at 1*s.* 6*d.* per diem, making a total of 132,960*l.* In the estimates of 1813 there appeared a charge for precisely the same description of men, at 1*s.* per diem. Now, if in 1813, 1814, and 1315, 1*s.* a day was thought to be a sufficient sum, he should like to know what possible reason could be urged for augmenting it to 1*s.* 6*d.* when the price of every article was so greatly diminished? On a former occasion when he mentioned the subject, it was thought to be a sufficient answer from the other side of the House, that it did not belong to the admiralty department, and a great outcry was raised, as if a prodigious triumph had been obtained by the government. For his own part, he must say, he did not care in what department the abuse was committed; it was enough that the abuse existed to induce that House to look into the subject. He found, upon looking into the estimates, that a considerable number of men were victualled at the same rate. He was informed, however, from good authority, that the actual expense of victualling the men at Milford Haven was not more than 1*s.* a day, for beef, bread, and beer, and that the surplus was a perquisite belonging to the officer who provided their food. The gross amount of expense which the country had to pay, between the rate of 1*s.* and 1*s.* 6*d.* was 44,000*l.*; and certainly if no more satisfactory information was given upon the subject than what had already been afforded, he should feel it his duty, when the matter came forward in a committee, to move the reduction of the whole expenditure to what it had cost the public in preceding years. The hon. member concluded by moving for a statement of the number of men in the several departments of the naval service, including the transport and custom-house service, victualled by any agreement or allowance other than by the competition of public tender.

Mr. *Croker* said, he must distinctly deny that the answer given to the hon. member on a former evening was, that the particular case he alluded to did not belong to the admiralty department. The answer was, that unless the House permitted the estimates to go into a committee, it would be impossible to give those detailed explanations which were necessary; and that what the hon. member called a *primâ facie* case against the navy estimates, was in fact no *primâ facie* case at all. The hon. member stated that he had received information that the men in Milford Haven could be victualled for one shilling a day, or a little more: but he should recollect that the charge in the estimate of one shilling and sixpence per diem referred to the harbours of Portsmouth, Plymouth, Chatham, Sheerness and other ports, and not at all to Milford Haven. He believed there were not ten men at Milford Haven, whose victualling was included in the item in the navy estimates then before the House. It was not quite fair, therefore, to take one of the cheapest places in Wales, and calculate the expense of other districts upon the charge which would be incurred in that particular port. Besides, the hon. member, in his estimate of what was necessary to victual men, included only beef, beer, and bread, forgetting, or probably not knowing, that besides those articles, every man in the navy received various other things, such as butter, cocoa, wine, lemon-juice, vegetables, &c. Since the statement which had been made by the hon. member on a former evening, he had taken the trouble to make a particular inquiry of the meritorious officer who was at the head of the victualling department, who assured him that one shilling and sixpence per diem was the real average expense of the amount of rations which each man received. Even in Milford Haven, where there was one open and avowed competition, the charge by contract was one shilling and four-pence halfpenny, notwithstanding the cheapness of the place. With respect to the motion of the hon. member, he certainly could have no objection to produce all the papers he required, or any other which he might think necessary, and it was his firm conviction that whenever the question was thoroughly discussed, it would be found that one shilling and sixpence per diem was not more than enough to cover the expense of the average ration of each man.

Mr. *Barham*, having lately come from Milford Haven, said he could give some idea, from personal observation, of the price of provisions at that place for the last four months. Beef was from 2½*d.* to 3½*d.* per pound; butter 5*d.*, and pork 24*s.* per cwt.

Mr. *Fremantle* wished to know whether any thing was furnished to the men, under the present contract, which was not furnished in the years 1813, 1814, and 1815? If not, it made no difference in the argument, and it would remain for the hon. secretary to show why those articles which were supplied at 1*s.* a day in those years, should now require 1*s.* 6*d.* when the prices of all commodities had fallen so much.

Mr. *Croker* expressed his readiness to enter into the fullest details on the subject in the committee.

Mr. *Jones* said, that navy contracts, which had been taken at a large price, might not have expired, and the contractors were entitled to the full benefit of the fall in the market. He could not but deprecate the querulous and captious objections which were made by gentlemen on the other side of the House.

Admiral *Markham* denied that there was any just ground for the difference between the charge of 1813 and that now made.

Mr. *Croker* said, that the package, stowage, and carriage, connected with victualling in ordinary, added to the price of the provisions, amounted to about 1*s.* 6*d.* per man. That was the calculation made last year, and it was perfectly correct.

Mr. *Brougham* said, that, with respect to what had fallen from the hon. secretary on the subject of a contract (if indeed any contract existed) he laboured under a mistake. The fact was, that whatever species of agreement had been made, was entered into when provisions were extremely cheap—and then came the objection of his hon. friend to granting an increased allowance for the support of these men. To that objection no answer could be given; nor, indeed, could he conceive what proper answer could be offered. In 1811 and 1813, when provisions were from 30 to 40 per cent. dearer than they were now, one shilling per man was allowed for victualling those persons at Milford; but now the rate allowed for victualling them was increased, in a greater degree than the price of provisions had fallen. The allowance was increased 50 per cent.; one shilling and sixpence being now granted for the subsistence of each man. He knew of no rise in any of the minor articles, connected with bread, meat, and beer, that could justify such an increase of allowance.

Mr. *Croker* said, the learned gentleman did not appear to understand the subject which was before the House. There was not one word in it relating to a contract. He should be ready, when the House went into a committee on the navy estimates, to give the most ample information that gentlemen could desire.

Mr. *Brougham* said, it was not he, but the hon. gentleman who laboured under an error. He never said there was a contract—he rather denied it; but the hon. gentleman had stated there was a contract.

Mr. *Baring* observed, that there appeared to be a contract and no contract, in this case. He would show that it stood in that predicament. The hon. member for Pembroke had stood forward, without being sufficiently acquainted with the facts of the case. In what he (Mr. Baring) had said, he meant not to cast any reflection on the character of Mr. Williams, which, doubtless, was very respectable. He believed, however, that Mr. Williams contracted with himself to victual the men under his command. This was an abuse that ought never to be suffered; because the authority of the commander, in such a case, might prevent the men from exercising a good and wholesome check over his proceedings, with respect to the quantity and quality of the provisions supplied to them. Now five months ago, those men were victualled for 1*s.* per day; and he would ask the hon. gentleman, or any other member, to state a good reason for increasing the allowance to 1*s.* 6*d.* when provisions had fallen in price? Either the men were kept in a state of starvation formerly, or they now received more than they ought to have. This matter required an explanation on the part of government. From every thing that had passed, it appeared, that Mr. Williams, having a salary of 200*l.* per annum, made a perquisite of 1,000*l.* a year upon his contract. The men in ordinary did not get the lemon-juice; the supply was merely bread, meat, and beer; and there was no difference whatever in the quantity of supply last year from what it was at this moment.

Mr. *Jones* disclaimed any personal acquaintance with Mr. Williams; but, as he believed him to be a meritorious individual, he thought it was his duty to defend his character from the attack that had been made on it.

Mr. *Baring* said, he never meant to insinuate that the fault lay with Mr. Williams, but with that board which suffered such a proceeding.

The motion was then agreed to.

Mr. *Baring* next rose to move for "a statement of the expense of building and fitting for sea the frigates Cydnus and Eurotas; also a statement of the time when such frigates were fit for service, and of the condition in which they at present are." The hon. gentleman observed, that when the country was paying immense sums for the building of ships, it was right that the House should know distinctly what became of them. The Cydnus and Eurotas, which had cost a great sum of money, were built in the year 1813; and, he believed, they were now either breaking up for fire-wood, or condemned for that purpose. If this system were pursued, what advantage could the country derive from an immense expenditure for the construction of vessels that were not fit for use in the course of two or three years? When he mentioned this subject before, he was told, with great triumph, that the Cydnus and Eurotas were built in merchants' yards. He did not care where they were built, nor by whom. He brought the circumstance forward as a proof that gross neglect was imputable to those who thus lavished the public money on articles that were worthless. If those ships were, after three years service, only fit for fire-wood, those at the head of the naval department were guilty of inexcusable neglect. There might be other ships in the same situation, but he would confine his motion to the Cydnus and Eurotas.

Sir *George Warrender* had no objection to the production of the statement moved for. With respect to the system of building in the merchants' yards, which he had touched on last night, and into which, on a future occasion, he would go more at large, he had to inform the hon. gentleman that it was abandoned altogether. That erroneous system, which had cost millions, that, but for its adoption, would have been saved to the country, was, by the new arrangements, abandoned, not for a time, but for ever.

Mr. *Brougham* could not avoid expressing the great pleasure he felt at the compliment which had just been paid to the transcendant merits of his noble friend, earl St. Vincent. He well remembered, some years ago, an attack was made, in that House, by a gentleman deceased, on the conduct of his noble friend. It was repelled by the gallant admiral near him (admiral Markham) and several other naval characters. That attack was pointed in such a manner against earl St. Vincent, that it might have produced a vote of censure from that House—nay, it might have led, as perhaps was intended, to his impeachment. That accusation was made almost on the sole ground that the noble earl had not built ships in the merchants' yards. But they had happily lived to see the day, when the policy of the noble earl was adopted in its full extent—when every man, conversant with the subject, deprecated the building of ships of war in merchants' yards. He thought the services of that noble earl at sea (and it was impossible to describe his merits more strongly) were not greater than those he had performed for his country, by his civil administration of the navy; and, above all, by that rigid system of economy which he had introduced—which, if it had been followed up by those who succeeded him, would have saved the country an expenditure of many millions.

Mr. *Croker* said, he had always admitted, that the principles introduced by the noble earl had great merit. This was never denied—on the contrary, they had been long acted on. Above five years had elapsed since a ship of the line had been built in a merchants' yard; still, it might be convenient, to have a few sloops or a few frigates, constructed in private yards, in cases of emergency. It would be better to do that than to send ships of the line to be built there, while they threw away their own ships and docks for the construction of small vessels. For sixteen years past, the admiralty had been endeavouring to work the necessary reforms in the departments with which it was connected. He would be ready, when the proper time came, to point out the circumstances which had retarded the accomplishment of so desirable an object.

Mr. *Forbes*, as we understood, expressed a hope, that the building of ships of war in India would not be abandoned. He wished to know how the Malacca frigate, which was entirely built of Indian wood, had answered?

Mr. *Croker* said, that the yard at Bombay was still kept open, and a certain proportion of vessels would be built there. But the hon. member would see, that it was a system which ought not to be pushed too far. In the estimates of the present year would be found a charge for building a ship of the line at Bombay. With respect to the Malacca he could not, on the moment, give any information.

Admiral *Markham* said, there were papers in the admiralty which would give every information relative to that vessel. The officer who sent home the wood of which the Malacca was composed, pointed out, specifically, the particular purpose for which each species of timber was proper.

Mr. *Baring* again observed, that he could not tell where the Cydnus and Eurotas were built. Let them have been built wheresoever they might, it was clear to him, that, if they were rotten in the course of three years, gross neglect was imputable to the admiralty, who had thus shamefully wasted the public money.

Mr. *Croker* said, those connected with the admiralty would show, at the proper time, that they were not guilty of negligence or of a wasteful expenditure of the public money. One of the ships in question had done her work very well. On her first cruise she had captured a French frigate, which was now in our service.

Mr. *Baring*. The taking a prize on her first cruise, is no answer to that of which I complain.

The motion was then agreed to.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Wednesday, March 27.

Bill for Naturalizing the Prince of Cobourg.] The earl of Liverpool, pursuant to his notice of yesterday, moved the consideration and suspension of the relevant standing orders in this particular case, which being forthwith ordered by their lordships, he moved the second reading of the bill for the Naturalization of his serene highness Prince Leopold of Cobourg. This accordingly took place, and the commitment of the bill was negatived by their lordships.—The noble earl then, after a short pause, moved the third reading of the bill, which was accordingly read a third time and passed, and a message ordered, to acquaint the Commons therewith.—The lord chancellor observed, that it was usual, in cases of bills of this kind, as relating to the royal family, that the bill should be sent down to the Commons by two of his majesty's judges; but as those learned personages were now engaged on the circuit, that proceeding necessarily could not take place. He should propose that the bill be sent to the Commons by their lordships' ordinary messengers. This meeting the sense of the House, it was accordingly taken down by the attendant masters in chancery.—In the lapse of a few minutes, during which some routine and private business was disposed of, Mr. Bathurst, attended by several members, returned the bill from the Commons, with the complete acquiescence of that House to the bill in all its stages.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, March 27.

Butter Trade of Ireland.] Sir *Frederic Flood* presented a petition from the county of Wexford, respecting the distressed state of the Butter Trade. The hon. baronet expressed a hope that the House would duly consider this petition, proceeding, as it did, from a most loyal, respectable body, and from a peculiarly peaceable district. He trusted that the cries of distressed Ireland would influence both parliament and his majesty's ministers. Some sign of this influence he was happy to hail in the notice which a right hon. gentleman had given of a motion with regard to the importation of foreign butter. Thus some relief would be afforded to Ireland, which could produce butter enough to supply its own consumption, and the English market also. But the right hon. gentleman's proposition would be ineffectual, if it did not go the length of affording the butter trade the same protection which was at present enjoyed by the corn growers, namely, by prohibiting the import of any foreign butter, unless when butter rose to a certain price.

Mr. *Robinson* assured the hon. baronet that he felt a due solicitude for the interest of Ireland, and that it was principally by a consideration for that country he was disposed to give the notice alluded to. But he hoped that he should not be deemed disrespectful to the hon. baronet's constituents, if he declined on the present occasion to state the precise bearing of the measure which he proposed to bring forward. He should, however, fully explain his proposition on Friday, to which day he meant, for the convenience of some gentlemen, to postpone the motion of which he had given notice for this evening.

Mr. *Methuen* expressed a hope, that the right hon. gentleman would not, in his consideration of the butter trade, lose sight of the subject of cheese.

The petition was ordered to lie on the table.

Bill for Naturalizing the Prince of Cobourg.] A message from the Lords brought down a bill intituled, "An Act for exhibiting a bill in this present parliament for naturalizing his serene highness Leopold George Frederic, duke of Saxe, Margrave of Meissen, Landgrave of Thuringuen, Prince of Cobourg of Saalfeld." The bill was immediately passed through all its stages, and ordered to be returned to the Lords.

Committee on Precedents of Naval and Military Officers accepting Offices of Profit.] Mr. *Wynn* said, that the motion he was about to make turned on the construction of an act of parliament, which had been in some cases construed contrary to its obvious intention. The act was passed on the 6th of Anne, and enacted, that if any member accepted of an office of emolument in the army or navy departments, he should vacate his seat. The House he considered to have no discretion to exercise on such a subject, if the case he was about to mention came within the limits of the statute. He would maintain that the office of treasurer of Greenwich hospital, came within the statute, notwithstanding any precedent that might be pleaded. Whenever an officer, naval or military, received an appointment which was not strictly a professional commission, a new writ was issued. So it was in the cases of admiral Aylmer and another, on being appointed masters of Greenwich hospital, when the new writs were issued. It stood so until 1732, when a question arose on the appointment of general Wade to the governorship of forts in Scotland. A construction was then put on the act, that military men, being made governors of forts and garrisons, were excepted. In the present case, he was desirous of saying, that he meant no disrespect to the gallant officer sir Thomas Thompson, who had been appointed treasurer of Greenwich hospital. No officer could be more proper than one who had so distinguished himself, and fought and bled in his country's service. He avowed the highest respect for him. The governor of Greenwich hospital, it was true, was excepted; but the office of treasurer stood on different grounds. By the charter the governorship was in the appointment of the Crown, and the admiralty could appoint all but the governor, treasurer, &c. But in 1809, the Crown made some new regulations, excepting the surveyor and comptroller. The office of treasurer might now be held without the holder having a knowledge of naval affairs. In the case of captain Baker, in 1736, a new writ was moved for the borough of Hythe, on his accepting the office of treasurer of Greenwich hospital. This precedent he thought so decisive, that he could not see how it could be contested. He had understood that some reliance was placed on the case of sir Charles Saunders, who, however, appeared to have been appointed on the 11th of April 1754 to this office, but parliament had been dissolved on the 8th of April; therefore the question could not arise upon the vacation of his seat. The issuing of the warrant for the appointment appeared a sufficient authority for the new writ, as soon as it was published. No argument could be deduced from the instance of sir Charles Saunders. Indeed there were frequently transactions which escaped public notice in the House, and from that silence no inference could be drawn. He could even cite instances of seven months' delay after the death of a member before a new writ was issued. There must be time for verifying a member's decease. The House, in the present case, had a duty of some importance to execute. If the principle he applied to the treasurership of Greenwich hospital was contested, he would ask why the treasurer and the comptroller of the navy were bound to vacate their seats on being appointed? Why did sir Charles Wager vacate his seat, though a naval officer, on being made comptroller of the navy? Why did a naval officer, on going to the board of admiralty itself, which directed naval operations, vacate his seat? There were stronger reasons why a naval officer, on being appointed a commissioner of admiralty, should not vacate his seat, than there were for the treasurer of Greenwich hospital. It was decided in 1712 and 1717 that the master and lieutenant-general of the ordnance did not vacate their seats, but that the surveyor-general did. Now the surveyor-general of the ordnance was certainly a person more of a military officer than the treasurer of Greenwich hospital was of a naval officer. He certainly considered the decision of the House of Commons in the case of captain Baker as completely decisive, and beyond the power of any argument which he could anticipate, to overthrow. He should therefore move, "That the speaker do issue his warrant to the clerk of the Crown, to make out a new writ for a citizen to serve in this present parliament for the city of Rochester, in the room of sir Thomas Boulden Thompson, bart. he having, since his election, accepted the office of treasurer of Greenwich hospital.

Mr. *Bankes* thought his hon. friend acted right in calling the attention of the House to the subject. As doubts were entertained, he should have no objection to sending the question to a committee: but he thought his hon. friend had not quite fairly taken his view of the power of parliament to construe an act affecting its own members. He had endeavoured to show that the House had put a construction on the act not strictly according to its wording, and that thereby there had been a departure from the meaning of the statute of the 6th of queen Anne. A difference had occurred as to the interpretation of the act, and a proper relaxation had been made in favour of professional officers receiving certain appointments, which might indeed be regarded as steps in their promotion. The question was, whether the treasurership of Greenwich hospital, which had no naval command, might not be accepted by a naval officer without his vacating his seat. As sir Charles Saunders's case appeared to have attracted no particular attention at the time, he should leave it out of consideration. There was no particular parliamentary distinction between the offices of master and of treasurer. The duties of both offices were nearly of a similar description; but the later regulations rendered it necessary that they should be professional naval officers. From those limitations the Crown had no right to depart; consequently, the appointment of an unprofessional person could not be considered valid. If the strict meaning of the act had been departed from, it might be contended that a naval officer might sit without vacating. It appeared clear that treasurers of the hospital had sat in the House. There was no question that sir T. B. Thompson was perfectly capable of being re-elected; therefore no great point was obtained by pressing this proposition. For the last sixty years, the precedents were uniform as to the master, who was not more of a civil officer than the treasurer. He should be glad to see the matter referred to a committee.

Sir *John Newport* contended, that if the system was once adopted, of allowing persons to retain their seats in parliament who had accepted offices from the Crown, it would be impossible to say where the practice would stop. He could see no analogy between the office of treasurer and governor; but even if there were, it was enough that the House had recorded its opinion with respect to the former. He trusted most sincerely, that parliament would not sanction any further relaxation of the statute of queen Anne.

Mr. *Bathurst* maintained, that the offices of treasurer and master were precisely similar, and that as the latter was allowed to sit, it could be no violation of the act to permit the former to do the same. The House should bear in mind what were the dates of the different decisions of parliament. In 1720 it was determined that the master of Greenwich-hospital should not sit in parliament without vacating his seat; in 1736 the same determination was made with respect to the treasurer; but in 1746 it was determined that the master might retain his seat, and as, since that period, no question had ever been raised with respect to the treasurer, it was fair to construe the decision of parliament in his favour likewise. The analogy was certainly as strong on one side as the other,

Mr. *Ponsonby* observed, that what the right hon. gentleman called the decision of parliament in the case of the treasurer, was nothing more than the practice of parliament; which was a very different thing. If no question had ever been raised with respect to the treasurer sitting in that House, he should like to know how any decision could ever have been had. The only decision, in fact, that was upon record in the case of the treasurer of Greenwich-hospital was one, which declared he could not retain his seat in that House, without a new election. Upon the whole, he thought it would be much better and more consistent with the dignity of that House, to refer the question to a committee, for he deprecated any thing like precipitation in a question of this kind. Parliament ought to pronounce its opinion only after mature deliberation.

Mr. *Bathurst* observed, that when he spoke of a decision, he intended to imply a practice of the House; when the right hon. gentleman mentioned a decision, he must speak of a case agitated in the House.

Mr. *Ponsonby* replied, that when a question had been proposed to the House, it depended on the decision; but it was obvious that no decision could be made till the particular case came before them.

Mr. *Wynn* said, he certainly should not press the motion in its present form, as it appeared to be the opinion of the House that it would be better to refer the matter to a select committee. The hon. member then withdrew the original motion, and substituted the following: "That a committee be appointed to inquire into precedents of cases of naval and military officers accepting offices of profit from the Crown, and continuing to sit as members of this House."

The motion was agreed to, and a committee appointed.

NAVY ESTIMATES.] On the motion

of the chancellor of the exchequer, that the House resolve itself into a committee of supply,

Lord *Folkestone* begged leave to state a fact or two to the House before going into the committee. He considered it of some importance to put the House in possession of these facts, that the committee might be better prepared for the discussion. He could not help alluding to a triumph which an hon. gentleman on the opposite side exulted in having acquired over an hon. friend of his, respecting the two frigates said to be now breaking up for firewood. His hon. friend had stated that these frigates were built in the king's yards, and gentlemen on the opposite side maintained they were built in a merchants' yard. This mistake of his hon. friend had been exulted in, as affording a great deal of triumph to them, anxious as they naturally were at the present moment of grasping at every unlucky slip. But while these gentlemen were so disposed to glory, he would tell them it was a matter of no moment where these vessels had been built, but it was a proof of the grossest negligence on the part of the admiralty, who did not see that they were properly built. Really it was a very fine argument to tell the House and the country, that because so much public money had been foolishly laid out, no blame attached to the admiralty, seeing these ships were not built in the king's yards. It was truly a very fine apology for their extravagance. He would further tell the House, that from the documents now on the table, he found the vessels had been built in merchants yards, but with timber furnished expressly for that purpose by government. He wished to know, whether government knew that the dry rot was at that time in that very wood which they thus made use of? He also wished to know, whether they were not at this moment building some from the same lot of wood? [No, from the ministerial benches]. He was glad to hear this was not the case. Government betrayed in a striking light the weakness of their cause, by urging as an apology for the loss of public money, that the vessels were built in merchants yards. He trusted they would hereafter remember, that the feelings of the country were not to be insulted, or its money expended in so improper a manner.

Mr. *Robinson* said, he only undertook to show, in answer to the hon. gentleman, that the ships were not built in the king's yards. It was an incidental point which had arisen in the debate, and the hon. gentleman would have found it explained if he had looked in the estimates. As to any triumph arising from the hon. gentleman having been set right, he believed nobody but the gentlemen on the opposite side considered it so. Respecting the timber, he could say nothing about it, as he was not in the admiralty at the time.

Lord *Folkestone* replied, that the right hon. gentleman must nevertheless have seen by the estimates, that the timber was furnished from the king's yards.

Mr. *Baring* was entirely of the same opinion, with the noble lord. It was extremely improper to see the public money so thoughtlessly lavished. What was the surveyor of the navy? For what purpose was he appointed, if he did not look in a careful manner to the way in which vessels were built. It was a very fine proof of the attention of the admiralty to the interests of the country, and would no doubt give a high opinion of them to the public, when it was known that they built vessels one year which were rotten the next. No merchant in the kingdom would ever think of building his vessels in such a miserably defective state, and it was derogatory to the honour of government to say that they were less attentive to what they built for the national safety.

Mr. *Croker*, in explanation, begged leave to state, that when the Baltic trade was shut up, and a general embargo pervaded the continent, government not knowing how soon the Russian ports might be opened, had purchased a quantity of fir timber from America, and as the enemy had been very much employed in building vessels in the Scheldt, ministers thought it their duty to build as many temporary frigates as they possibly could, out of this American fir, because they knew it would not keep very long in the yards. It was well known that fir vessels, although apparently in good condition, went often to wreck in a singular manner. He nevertheless could assure the House that several of the vessels built of that wood were yet in good repair. From the papers to be laid before the House in a few days, respecting these two frigates, the truth of what he had now stated would be seen.

The House having resolved itself into the committee, and the navy estimates being referred to the said committee,

Sir *George Warrender* observed, that as the gentlemen opposite had declared, that on the subject of the charges for the civil department of the navy, they were not inclined to oppose any thing which they might deem necessary for the public service, they ought not to assume that the amount of these charges must necessarily fall short in the first year of peace from what they were in the last year of war. He trusted that every charge in these estimates, and every item, could be explained to the satisfaction of the House. He had stated on a former evening, that great reductions were in contemplation in the foreign yards, as a necessary consequence of peace. He did not apprehend that a reduction could be made immediately in the victualling department, for in some instances an increase would be necessary, to bring up and settle the arrears of the war. Respecting the allowance for the widow's charity, the sum of 46,000*l.* was proposed to be voted, as a great reduction had been made in the fund by the reduction of the number of seamen from 140,000 to 33,000, which deprived it of the produce received from their wages, as well as from that of the number of fictitious men, which were taken in the proportion of one out of every hundred. The expenditure of the fund was 86,000*l.* and it was necessary to apply to parliament for 40,000*l.* to make up the deficiency thus occasioned. The hon. baronet then justified the sums for the building and repairing of ships, and observed that the system of building and repairing in the king's yards, necessarily brought along with it a great increase of the public works. He stated several reductions that had already been made in different yards, amongst which was a saving at Chatham of 30,000*l.*; and concluded with moving the first resolution, viz. "That 1,513,140*l.* 10*s.* 9*d.* be granted to defray the salaries and contingent expenses of the admiralty, navy, navy pay and victualling offices; the officers of the out-ports and foreign yards; the wages, and victuals to officers, and shipkeepers of vessels in ordinary; the expense of harbour mooring and rigging; the repairs of buildings, and bounty to chaplains."

Mr. *Baring* objected very much to the plan of taking these estimates in one whole, as it prevented a fair discussion on each. As eighteen articles were thus summed up by the hon. baronet in one resolution, he suggested the propriety of dividing the resolution, and taking each separately.

Captain *Pellew* objected to the plan adopted by the hon. baronet, as rather tending to obscure than elucidate the views of government. He wished to know why further reductions than those proposed by ministers, might not be effected? For example, in the department of widows' pensions, why should the duties of surveyor and paymaster not be discharged by one man, and why should the six commissioners, each having 1,000*l.* per annum, not be reduced to four? In the proposed change of the place for building vessels he agreed, but thought it unreasonable in ministers to make that an apology for extravagant expenditure. He thought a very great reduction might also be made in the foreign building yards. He was glad to hear one of the yards at Gibraltar or Malta (he could not say which) had been given up, and he also thought one yard was sufficient for all India. From having resided there five years, he was prepared to say so with confidence. He was happy to hear ministers express their determination to be economical. He gave them credit for their good intentions, and would like very well to see them once realized. At the same time, he would appeal to the good sense of the House, whether that deserved the name of economy, which gave an undue preference to one class of his Majesty's subjects over another. He would illustrate this by a fact, which he knew from experience. When a colonel in the army died, however rich his widow might be, she still received the pension from government, but if a captain of a vessel left his widow an income of double the pension allowed by government, she did not receive the pension. This was a case which some might call economy, but he would call it injustice. It was, besides, worthy of remark, that officers in the army paid not one farthing to aid this fund for their widows, whereas sea captains and officers did pay, and it was a very hard case for their widows not to get back their own property. The lords of the admiralty, he had no doubt, were able to explain this in a proper manner, and he felt it his duty, in justice to his own feelings, and the feelings of those gallant men who had so often bled and conquered for England, that it should be explained. He was far from wishing economy not to be adopted, but he considered that such inequality should be noticed. He believed since Monday last his majesty's ministers had formed some further plans of reduction, which he trusted to see executed, and on that account he would not decidedly oppose the estimates. At the same time, aware of undue preference being given to the army, which he illustrated in a variety of instances respecting the half pay given to each, he anxiously entreated his majesty's ministers to consider what was due to those gallant men whose exertions had never been wanting to their country, who had spent an arduous life in its service, and after bearing innumerable burthens and bequeathing glorious laurels to it, were allowed to return in what, to say the least, he thought a rather neglected state.

Mr. *Ponsonby* was most anxious that the committee should pursue the course that was adopted with the army estimates, by voting each head of service by itself: otherwise it would be difficult to understand their necessity. He could foresee no solid objection to this mode on the other side of the House, and nothing would lead more to the economy of which they professed themselves desirous, than to enable the House to understand each particular sum they were called on to vote. He therefore hoped there would be no objection to put the resolutions in the way suggested.

Sir *G. Warrender* wished the sum to be voted for the ordinary estimates altogether, as they related almost entirely to the civil departments. He trusted this first head, voted together, would answer the right hon. gentleman's purpose.

Mr. *Ponsonby* replied, that there were eighteen divisions under the head of part the first, and he should propose that each of these be voted separately. Then, if gentlemen thought, that where 30,000*l.* was proposed, 25,000*l.* was sufficient, they could express their opinions, and leave the necessity of the larger sum to be explained.

Lord *Castlereagh* thought there was a little distinction between the proposition before the House, and the rest that were to follow. He felt that there might be considerable inconvenience in departing from the ordinary mode as far as had been done in the case of the army. If the House had pursued that course with respect to the army, he did not feel that it was a precedent for the navy. It appeared to him that there could be no better course than to take the branches of service as they were numbered. If, however, the House thought otherwise, he would suggest to take the 61,000*l.* first, and proceed with the other heads as they stood.

Mr. *Ponsonby* was happy the noble lord had conceded the point. He did not see how any pledge could be given; but if this mode should be found, as he believed it would, convenient, instead of inconvenient, the House would certainly pursue it on future occasions.

On the first resolution being put, viz. "That it is the opinion of this committee, that a sum not exceeding 59,723*l.* 16*s.* 7*d.* be granted to his majesty for defraying the salaries and contingent expenses of the admiralty office for the year 1816."

Mr. *Tierney* adverted to the charge brought against him by the hon. gentleman opposite (Mr. Croker) of having committed a great mistake on a recent occasion, in asserting that on a comparison for a long period of the expenses of the civil departments of the navy during the last year of a war and the first year of the succeeding peace, a diminution had invariably been found in the latter. The hon. gentleman had declared, that if he (Mr. Tierney) had used reasonable diligence in his inquiries, he would have found that the ordinaries of the navy had in no case been diminished, but had frequently been increased in the first year of a peace. True. But what he maintained was, that in the particular offices which he had specified, there had invariably been a diminution of expense in the first year of peace, as compared with the expense of the last year of war. A reference to the journals of the House, which he had since made, proved this in the clearest manner. At the peace of Utrecht the whole ordinaries of the navy had increased, but the expenses of the offices to which he had alluded had diminished. It appeared that in 1762, the last year of war, the expense of the admiralty and navy offices had been 36,093*l.*, the expenses of the dock-yards 16,852*l.*, and the expenses of the out-ports 5,370*l.*; and that in 1763, the first year of peace, the expense of the admiralty and navy offices had been 36,093*l.*, the expense of the dock-yards 16,560*l.*, and the expense of the out-ports 4,920*l.*;—diminutions certainly not worth talking about, except to show the accuracy of the general statement which he had made. Let the same comparison be made between the years 1748 and 1749—the former the last year of a war, the latter the first year of a peace. In 1748, the expence of the admiralty and navy offices was 37,913*l.*; in 1749, 34,820*l.*; being a decrease of above 3,000*l.* And yet the hon. gentleman had maintained with great gravity, that he (Mr. Tierney) must be the most ignorant of human beings if he did not know that there had always been an increase rather than a decrease; the hon. gentleman founding on his notable discovery that there had been an increase in the ordinaries, the declaration that he (Mr. Tierney) had committed a gross mistake in asserting that there had been no increase in the particular offices which he had described.—Having said so much to clear himself from the imputation attempted to be cast upon him by the hon. gentleman, he would proceed to make some observations on the question immediately before the committee. By an order in council, dated the 30th of January, 1816, and which, by accident, he had not seen until that morning, a great change had been made in the establishment of the clerks of the admiralty. Why had this been done without the opinion of parliament? Why had not the hon. gentleman waited for a couple of months, to know in what way parliament would dispose of many public questions bearing on the subject, and particularly with the property tax? It was an invidious task to make observations on a subject, in which so many laborious and respectable individuals were interested. A more meritorious set of persons than the clerks in those offices, he believed, had never existed. During the short time that he was in office, he had an opportunity at Somerset-house, of observing the conduct of the clerks in the department to which he had the honour to belong, and he must say, that no men could be more deserving. But he must condemn in the first place, the system of making alterations of the kind, which had been made without consulting parliament upon them; and in the second place, he must object to the nature of the alteration, that had been made. What had been done? In the year 1814, the number of clerks in the admiralty-office, navy-office, navy pay-office, and victualling-office, was 449. At present the number was 425. Thus there was a diminution of 24 clerks. But how stood the salaries? In 1814, the amount of the salaries for the clerks belonging to those offices, was 90,840*l.*—at present it was 101,000*l.*; being an increase of 10,000*l.* Under the new regulations, therefore, it appeared, that while the number of clerks had been diminished, the expense had been augmented. If the hon. gentleman had abstained from his plan—if he had let things alone—all parties would have been better satisfied: twenty four gentlemen would not have been turned adrift, and 10,000*l.* a year would have been saved to the public. Nor was this sum of 10,000*l.* the only additional public expense which the new arrangements had occasioned. To get rid of these clerks, the superannuated list had been increased. Since the year 1814, the increased expense of superannuation in the admiralty had been 3892*l.*—in the navy-office 1013*l.*; making together near 5000*l.* Thus a further outgoing of 15,000*l.* had been created, simply because the hon. gentleman had thought the present a proper moment to new mould and recast his office. He would not say that the modifications were reprehensible; what he contended was, that parliament ought first to have been consulted on the subject. A committee above stairs ought to have been appointed to investigate it, as had been done in former cases. Let a comparison be instituted between the labour performed at the present moment in the admiralty and the number of clerks employed to perform it, with the labour performed there and the number of clerks employed to perform it in 1800. The year 1800 was one of the most active of the war; and yet at that period there were employed at the admiralty only 16 clerks, while now the number employed was 28—the number to which the establishment had been reduced from 35. It was to him utterly incomprehensible why, in profound peace, 28 persons should be employed in an office the duties of which were satisfactorily discharged by 16 persons in a time of most active warfare. To answer this, something more would be necessary than a speech from the hon. gentleman. The hon. gentleman might perhaps get up and attempt by argument to show two and two made five. If so, he had rather not hear him. He had been brought up in the conviction that two and two made four; and he confessed that he was so much attached to old prejudices, that he did not wish that conviction to be proved erroneous [A laugh].—And now with respect to the individuals who had been discharged from the admiralty-office: they were seven in number—all put on the superannuation list. One of these individuals was 55 years of age, and he readily admitted, that at that period of his life a public servant was entitled to a proper provision. But the other six were all in the prime of life. The eldest was 44—he hoped that was to be considered the prime of life, for if not, he (Mr. Tierney) was in his dotage [A laugh].—But there was one who had been appointed at the age of 15—that was eight years ago—so that at 23 this individual was superannuated! There was another gentleman—he believed of the name of Fisher—as discerning, as active, and as intelligent a man as ever lived. Did he ask for superannuation? No. But the hon. gentleman was determined to make new arrangements in the office, and to that determination all other considerations must yield. If the House would bear this, they would bear any thing. It was not liberality—it was wantonness, it was profusion, it was extravagance. Let it also be recollected, that by the decision of the House on the property tax, 10,000*l*. a year had been added to that expense, or, which was the same thing, the 10,000*l*. that would have been deducted from the 101,000*l* paid, would not now be withheld. By the new order too he believed (though he might be in error on this point) that as soon as the clerks were put on the establishment, their salaries were to increase 10*l*. a year without limitation. All this ought to have been brought under the consideration of parliament. With a view that it should be so brought, he would move that only six months expenditure should be voted, in order that the House might, in the mean while, appoint a committee to sift these matters to the bottom. The right hon. gentleman concluded accordingly by moving, instead of the original resolution, "that the sum of 29,861*l*. 18*s*. 3½*d*. be granted to his Majesty, for the expenses of the offices in question, up to the 24th of June 1816."

Mr. *Croker*, far from feeling dissatisfaction at the course taken by the right hon. gentleman, was grateful to him for the opportunity he had afforded him of replying to the statements he had made, and further, he was assured it would be in his power to convince the right hon. gentleman, that he was as much mistaken on this, as he had been on a former evening. The right hon. gentleman had commenced his speech by describing him (Mr. Croker) to have deceived the House by representing the first year of peace to have commonly given an excess on the ordinary estimates of the last year of war.—Yet the right hon. gentleman himself had proved the truth of that assertion, and admitted what indeed he could not deny, that the sums which he (Mr. Croker) had quoted from the records of office and of parliament, were correctly quoted. The House would do him the justice to recollect, that these he had stated to be the gross sums on the estimates, and had in no instance given them a character which did not belong to them. He had even stated, that various items, such as half-pay and allowances to officers were included in them, which might not, in the first instance, have been known to be so, and by the exclusion of which he might perhaps have made his argument stronger. The House would further do him the justice to remember his statement was this, that unless some minute errors had crept into the estimates referred to, which went a hundred years back it would be found, that even on those heads to which the right hon. gentleman had particularly alluded, there had uniformly appeared no reduction in the first year of peace, below the ordinary estimates of the last year of war.

Mr. *Tierney* interrupted the hon. member for the purpose of observing, that he had had no means of referring to the estimates he had mentioned, but by looking into the journals of the House. These gave him the gross sums voted. The estimates of 1781, 1782, and 1783, he had not pretended that he had looked at with a view to the present discussion.

Mr. *Croker* was only sorry the right hon. gentleman's memory had not served him so well on this occasion as it ought to have done. He would now go further, and say, there was on the present occasion a diminution of expense on the two heads to which the right hon. gentleman had particularly directed his attention, and this he was confident could not be found in the estimates of the first year after any former war. An equality in the expense was the worst case that could in any instance be proved against him. The right hon. gentleman had not referred to the estimates of 1801 and 1802.

Mr. *Tierney* said, he had not had the means of referring to them.

Mr. *Croker* said, the right hon. gentleman had not, on this occasion, referred to the estimates of 1801 and 1802. He had not made himself acquainted with the details of the naval service in that year of economy, which was now so highly praised, though the estimates were framed by that administration with which he had hastened to ally himself. On those items, which the right hon. gentleman had so particularly brought forward, it would be seen the charge in 1801 was 150,000*l.* and that it was augmented in the following year to 210,000*l.* It ought to be stated, that three items were included in this charge, and to guard against misapprehension he would state them in detail. There appeared on the estimates for 1801—

On account of the civil officers	£118,000
Ditto, dock-yards	25,000
Ditto, out-ports	7,000
	£150,000

On the estimates of 1802 the charges were—

On account of the civil officers	£119,900
Ditto, dock-yards	77,000
Ditto, out-ports	13,000
	£209,900

It would be seen from this statement, that there had been in 1802 an increase above the ordinary estimate of war, of 60,000*l.*; whereas in the present year, there was a reduction of from 4 to 3000*l.* on those heads of expenditure as compared with the charges thence arising in the last year. He owed the right hon. gentleman his sincere thanks for giving him an opportunity of affording the House this explanation. That which he had submitted to them, it would be observed, was simply a dry statement of facts, and it was for the right hon. gentleman opposite to prove their inaccuracy if he could. When he brought forward the increase of 1802 on certain items, did the right hon. gentleman suspect that he meant to accuse that administration of wanton extravagance? This was by no means his intention. He was not ignorant of the causes of that additional charge, which he had shown to have been created; and he knew that in the then situation of things, it was not an improper charge. The increased expense was necessary to that system, on which the government of this country then began to act, and was demanded by the circumstances of the times. Without throwing censure on the conduct of the ministers of that day, he contended, that the statement he had made was sufficient to overthrow the *primâ facie* case which the right hon. gentleman opposite thought he had made out, and to prove that the House ought to go into a committee on the items in question.

He now came to a part of the subject, on which he begged to be indulged with the particular attention of the House, and not only their attention, but their kind consideration in favour of a body of men far removed from political life, and as he hoped far beyond the reach of political hostility. He hoped the case would be decided solely on its own merits. Before he went further, he thought it right to observe that the act of parliament which had passed in 1810 did not go to prevent his majesty from altering the salaries of any of his servants in the public offices, by an order in council. It had not such an effect, nor did it go to give the Crown an unlimited power in this respect. Its object was but to confirm the rights previously vested in the sovereign; to clear up what was doubtful under former acts, and to preserve those powers which had previously been constitutionally held. It had not been framed so as at all to interfere with the regulations made by earl Spencer in 1800, for superannuating public officers after certain periods of service. He had brought in the bill, and before doing so had had the honour of offering these explanations to the House. The right hon. gentleman would see he had been mistaken as to the object of that act, and perceive it had only been brought in to confirm those rights which the Crown had enjoyed before. He trusted that what he had now said would be viewed as a sufficient answer to the charge which had been insinuated against him, of his having brought on this bill for some concealed object, and of having endeavoured to huddle up his own case with the cases of others. On the subject of the increase of the clerks salaries, the right hon. gentleman had really paid him a compliment which he did not deserve, in representing that alteration to have been his act alone. It was certainly his duty, as secretary to the admiralty, to hold the pen which recorded the decision come to, and to attend the proceedings which had taken place before the alteration was resolved upon. But though this, in the routine of duty, was what he was necessarily called upon to do, the right hon. gentleman must necessarily know, that the increase which had taken place could not have been made by him without the concurrence first of the board of admiralty and eventually of his majesty's government.

He would now proceed to show how, in point of fact, this measure had been forced on ministers. About the year 1811, the state of the clerks in the naval departments became so very miserable, that several memorials were received at the admiralty, setting forth the extreme distress to which they were reduced, and praying for an increase of salary. At that period the government, engaged in a most expensive war, was unwilling to listen to any representations of this nature, or to grant any augmentation of income to any of the officers in the public departments. In 1812, an hon. baronet, the member for Westminster, who was certainly not very prodigal of the public money, had submitted a motion to the House, the object of which was to obtain for the navy office clerks an increase of salary. It was then his (Mr. Croker's) duty to object to that proposition, but a promise was given that the subject should be attended to when peace was restored, or a more favourable opportunity for looking into it arrived. The inquiries, it would hence be seen, had not been conducted with too great haste, nor the result too hastily determined. It was not a business that had been got up the day before parliament met, as had been insinuated. He should have the honour of explaining how it had been done, and he did not hesitate to assert, that no question had ever been more attentively considered, nor had any measure been more gradually proceeded with, with a view that it might finally be satisfactorily completed. So far had the board of admiralty been from hurrying this business, that the hon. baronet already mentioned, in consequence of the delay, brought forward another motion in 1813, similar to that which he had made in the preceding year. On this occasion he had been told that inquiries were then making, and that the result of these would be laid before the House in due time. The most minute inquiries had indeed been made, not only into the general state of the establishment, but the cure of every individual in the offices, name by name, and man by man, had been examined. In consequence of these proceedings, it was clearly ascertained, that the salaries of many of the clerkships were so small, that, he had no hesitation in stating the fact, they hardly enabled their wretched possessors to live. The case of the lower classes of them was particularly deplorable, and their misery so extreme, that it was not possible to refuse to do something for them. On this point, if he thought it necessary, he could offer some affecting statements which would touch the feelings of the House. This, however, he would not do, but should content himself with stating generally their distress to have been extreme.

If it would not fatigue the House he would now state the principle on which the change which had at length been resolved upon, had finally been made. [Hear, hear!]. Three plans had been under consideration. One proposed to give the clerk a salary apportioned to the duty to be performed, which he should receive from the day he first entered the office to the day of his death, without advance or variation. The second plan, (and this had been acted upon in some instances) was, to make no increase or allowance but in proportion to the length of time the individual might have been in the service. To fix the minimum and the maximum of his remuneration, and only to make the latter attainable by many years of service. This, however, he apprehended would be thought a very bad arrangement, as it went to take from the clerk all desire to distinguish himself by ability and zeal, from the consciousness that no merit could advance, no neglect retard him in his progress. A third plan, which was a union of parts of the two former, namely, the establishing several rates of salary proportionable to the responsibility of the duty to be performed; but which rates should afterwards be gradually increased according to the length and value of the service of the officer—this plan, while it excluded the errors of both the former propositions, united all their advantages, and he would venture to say, that no other system could be at once so fair to the individual and the public.

Having stated the principles on which the board proceeded, he had now to show in what way their plan had been carried into effect. In limiting the rewards to be given, they had been guided by the salaries heretofore paid to the senior clerks. Beyond the highest of these it was resolved the remuneration should not extend. The arrangement made went rather to reduce the highest salaries; it did not much augment the intermediate ones between the highest and the lowest; but it operated in favour of the inferior classes, whose means had been so small that they were literally starving. This, it was thought, would be a fairer distribution of the money paid by the public to remunerate this portion of their servants, and this, he was satisfied, the House would not hold to be extravagant. The minimum of the clerk's income was fixed at 100*l.* per annum with a yearly increase of 10*l.* In 61 or 62 years, not of life but in service, the extreme benefits of the whole might be attained. The individual would then receive 800*l.* per annum, the highest salary heretofore paid, and more than this he could not be entitled to by any length of service: a person of talents might attain promotion from one office to another, but still his increase, by length of service, would be only at the rate of 10*l.* a year. In consequence of this arrangement having been adopted at the admiralty, the House would see, that in the vote to be submitted to them, the chief clerk's salaries would suffer some diminution, and the benefit of it would be felt by the poorer classes. These had their salaries at once fixed at 100*l.* per annum, but when it was considered that at an increase of 10*l.* a year, twenty years of service were necessary to give them an annual income of 300*l.*, it would not be thought they were extravagantly provided for. The senior clerks were so far injured by this change, that he was satisfied nothing but a sense of duty, which made them content to sacrifice some individual advantages for the benefit of their fellow clerks, could have induced them to submit to it without making some remonstrance. The clerk of the admiralty, for instance, who in two years would have been entitled to 750*l.* per annum on the old plan, would now at the end of that period, receive but 700*l.* Thus also the five senior clerks in the navy-office, on the old plan, had received 3,400*l.*; their salaries on the new plan amounted to but 3,200*l.* and each of these would now have to serve five years longer to obtain the highest salary he could aspire to than was necessary under the old system. Others, whose salaries had amounted together to 5,300*l.* now received but 4,500*l.*; so that they would have ten years to serve to gain the salary they were entitled to before. The salaries paid to the lower classes had formerly amounted to 20,500*l.* They now created a charge of 26,000*l.* giving an increase on the sum paid to them of 5,500*l.* This sum, divided amongst 112 persons, gave an average of 49*l.* per man. In the victualling offices, an arrangement on the same principle had been made. The right hon. gentleman was mistaken in thinking the number of clerks on the establishment of the admiralty, had been raised from sixteen or seventeen to twenty-eight. In 1800 there were but sixteen clerks on the establishment; but it had been common occasionally to employ ten, fifteen, or sixteen temporary clerks to assist them, according to the pressure of the business before them. In the present instance there had not been any addition made to the number of clerks on the establishment, as supposed by the right hon. gentleman. He (Mr. Croker) conceived the right hon. gentleman had been led into this error, by observing that some of the clerks on the establishment were described as "extra clerks." This title of extra clerks had existed when he first knew the office, and indeed for more than half a century. Why the junior clerks were so called he knew not; but they were not less on the establishment than those who were not thus indicated; and were not, as he assumed the right hon. gentleman to have supposed, merely temporary clerks. He acquitted the right hon. gentleman of any wish to prefer an unfounded charge, and doubted not what he had said on this subject had risen from a mistake. The fact was, he (Mr. Croker) had not added one single clerk to the establishment.

He now came to the arrangement made with respect to the clerk's salaries in peace and war. When the admiralty had determined to abolish the distinctions heretofore made, they had judiciously determined upon reducing the number of clerks. This was to him at all times, a painful task, but it became a duty when it was found the whole of the number necessary in war were not wanted in peace. It had been thought better in consonance with the opinion of the board of revision, to reduce the number of persons employed, than to make any reduction in the salaries of those who were to be retained. By this determination, the expense to the public was made the same as if no change in the establishment had taken place. Not fewer than twelve clerks had been reduced since the year 1814 in the admiralty alone. These reductions had commenced from the first moment there was a prospect of the restoration of peace. He further begged the House to observe, that so far from the plan adopted by the admiralty having for its object the extension of patronage, it went directly to cut it up by the roots. Had there existed a wish to extend the patronage of the admiralty, the old salaries would have been continued, and the former number of clerks been kept up. This had not been done, and he would appeal to those in that House who knew most intimately the arrangements which had been made, if any new appointments had taken place within the last two or three years. The insinuation of the right hon. gentleman, that he himself had exercised any patronage with respect to the admiralty clerks, he would meet by denying the fact, and by stating to him, that he had been so careful in this respect, that when a vacancy occurred some two or three years ago, by the death of a clerk, whose salary was 450*l.* per annum, he, foreseeing the public might not want the service of any one in his place, had never recommended it to the board to appoint a successor. The right hon. gentleman had spoken of the decrease of labour at the admiralty. The duties to be performed were less interesting and curious, he admitted, than at particular periods, when the nation was engaged in war; but he could assure the right hon. gentleman, that both the secretaries and all the clerks had been more constantly and incessantly occupied for the last four months than at any period since he had known the office. For this a thousand reasons might be given, but one should suffice. In the year when he first came to the office, the number of the out pensioners of Greenwich was 3,300. They were now increased to 33,000, and every individual of these cost the admiralty two or three letters. All their claims to pay or prize money were to be inspected and inquired into, and this caused a proportionate increase of business at the navy office, and the navy pay office. Every one was obliged to "take out his time," as it was called. For this purpose, every ship's books were searched, and the time for which each man was to be paid, not only computed by months and weeks but even to days. Each man was then to be furnished with a certificate from the navy office, stating the whole of the particulars. To say nothing of the various and complicated accounts which were to be brought up, the business to which he had just alluded, was sufficient to prevent that extensive reduction from being made, which some gentlemen conceived to be practicable immediately on the return of peace, but which he took upon himself to say was impossible. A time would certainly arrive, should it please God to continue the peace, when this vast pressure of business would no longer be felt. There would be no more Greenwich pensioners added to the list;—no more ships' books coming home to be examined, no more pursers' accounts to be inspected, and when these should cease to flow in upon the admiralty and the navy office, as they did at present, it would be the duty of ministers to submit estimates lower in these minute particulars to the consideration of parliament. This could not be done at present, but he entreated the House to believe that nothing had been done which justice, necessity, and even economy had not concurred to recommend. Far from endeavouring unduly to extend the patronage of the admiralty, every step which had been taken tended to repress the exercise of it. In this spirit instructions had been sent to the heads of the several departments, restricting them from filling up any vacancies that might occur, and he again asserted, that the measures which had been adopted went to cut up that patronage which had been viewed with such a jealous eye, by the roots.

One word more on the subject of the clerks, whom he had been forced to reduce. From the moment when government determined on continuing the war salaries, it became his duty to diminish the number of clerks. Compelled to declare there were more in the office than he thought were necessary on the conclusion of a peace, the two eldest of the seven in question (gentlemen of great merit) one of whom had been thirty-five, and the other twenty-seven years in the service, had been superannuated at their own request. For the other five who had been reduced, and on whose account he had been charged with superannuating young men, since thus called upon, he would tell how he had acted by them. Undoubtedly nothing could be more painful than the duty which had devolved upon him, but he had performed it to the best of his ability. He had called on the chief clerk, and desired him to give, boldly and impartially, a list of the five least efficient clerks in the office. His decision had been regulated by no other criterion than this. To the members of the board of admiralty who now heard him, he appealed for the accuracy of this statement. He was far from wishing to say any thing that could be offensive to the individuals in question; but of course it would be felt by the House, that among a body of gentlemen like the clerks of the admiralty, some must be found less efficient than others, and he had thought it his duty to the public to relieve them from those whose services were least valuable. He hoped he had now answered all the arguments of the right hon. gentleman. If any thing had escaped him, he should be ready to offer such further information as it might be in his power to give. [Loud cries of Hear, hear!].

Mr. *Brougham* observed, that he did not see any reason for the exultation with which the speech of the hon. member was received. The hon. gentleman had gone into an examination of the heads. He should follow him, figure by figure, and show that this exultation was not well founded, if it rested only on the statements made by that hon. member. He had not the advantage of being in the House when his right hon. friend (Mr. Tierney) on a former evening had made a comparison of some of the estimates of the present year with those of the last year of war; but he collected from the reply which had been made to it, that his right hon. friend had shown the expenses of the estimates to have exceeded those of the last year of the war by 20,000*l.* To this it had been replied by the secretary to the navy that this was no extraordinary matter, and that it was the case with almost every peace establishment since the treaty of Utrecht. He had not denied the excess, but defended it by comparison with other times. He had compared it with the expenditure of 1802, when that excellent public officer lord St. Vincent was in office, and he seemed to have insinuated as a fault in his right hon. friend (Mr. Tierney), to have been a member of that administration. If that was all the charge which could be brought against his right hon. friend, he would only say that he was the most fortunate public man in that House. The hon. gentleman had said, that there was an excess in the naval expenditure in 1802 of 60,000*l.* above the last year of the war. But he would show to the House, that there was no parity between that year and the present. For the estimates were that year brought forward in March, and referred back to January, which embraced nearly three months of war, and of course they embraced a great deal of the war expenditure [Hear, hear!]. In the present year, the estimates could only refer to a time of peace, for the treaty of peace was signed six weeks before Christmas, and might have been signed a considerable time before that, if the negociations had not been protracted to too great a length.

No man could doubt, after the battle of Waterloo, that that event would be followed by a stable peace; and therefore retrenchments ought properly to have taken place—not six weeks, but six months before Christmas. But, at any rate, ministers were enabled to commence reductions six weeks before Christmas. But how stood matters in 1802? Preliminaries were not signed till October 1801;—and he would appeal to every man who was so unfortunate as to have a recollection which carried him so far back in life, if at that time the country was not in a state of the utmost uncertainty and suspense whether those preliminaries would be followed by peace? Why, then, lord St. Vincent had not peace estimates, but war estimates to bring forward; and that minister would have been most culpable who should have begun his reductions an hour sooner than the treaty of Amiens. This was the first answer which he had to make to the most unfair comparison instituted between the periods of 1802 and 1816. But the interval between the peace of Amiens and the breaking out of war, with respect to the maritime affairs of this country, could admit of no other comparison than a broad contrast with the present time. It was not necessary to go into any details to show this contrast. Let any man reflect for a moment what were the navies with which we had then to contend—and what was the sort of peace which we then obtained. We had to contend with the whole navies of Europe; in the first year after the war broke out, we had to make head against the confederacy of the northern powers; and he should not be accused of exaggeration, when he said, that there was not a sound statesman in England, who did not then view our situation as most alarming. But was there no other circumstance, in which the one period was contrasted with the other? Why, the different state in which France then was, necessarily rendered the establishment of lord St. Vincent much more extensive and expensive than it was fitting any establishment should now be. But last of all, there was one circumstance in which the two periods differed, to which he called the hon. gentleman's attention, for it was decisive of the question. He alluded to the remarkable circumstance which distinguished the peace of Amiens, not only from the present peace, but from any other peace ever entered into by this country. During that peace we were obliged to send eighteen or twenty sail of the line to cruize in the West Indies, for the purpose of watching the French armament sent out to St. Domingo, and which did not sail till the month of June. During the present peace there were no armaments, no fleets of any power keeping the sea.

He trusted that he had thus furnished a sufficient answer to the statement of the hon. gentleman, with respect to the estimates at these two periods of 1802 and 1816. He should now come to the next branch of the estimates, the increase of salaries to the different clerks: and here he could not but solicit the attention of the House to the candour with which the hon. secretary built this increase on the motion of an hon. baronet now absent (Sir F. Burdett). Said he, the hon. baronet, though not an advocate of lavish expenditure of public money, was yet convinced that the salaries of the clerks in the departments in question required to be augmented. But how stood the fact? The hon. member for Westminster did complain in the House of a transaction between lord Barham and the clerks in his department, by which those clerks purchased their offices by the payment of a certain price; and after paying this price, and notwithstanding the bargain which had been concluded with them, their salaries were diminished. He had then said, though he was no friend to raising the salaries of officers under government, and though these salaries so reduced might still be sufficient, that the individuals suffering had a right to complain after the payment made by them to lord Barham, of the reduction made in their salaries; and he argued, that it was thought necessary to make such a reduction, lord Barham ought to have defrayed the difference, or at least to have refunded a proportional part of the price. Now, how could it be contended that the principle of the hon. baronet had been acted on at present? During the war, when the clerks had a great deal to do, and when provisions were high, no relief was afforded to the complaining clerks—they were allowed to struggle on—and now came a peace; and whatever were the distresses of the country, it would be universally allowed that provisions were now cheaper than they had been for many years before; and this was the period chosen by them for making the increase, when money would go a great deal farther in the purchase of almost every commodity, and notwithstanding, too, all they had gained by the victory over the income tax, which at once increased the income of every man one-tenth—all which was kept out of account, the salaries being not merely kept on the former footing, but even increased.

There were several other items in the estimates to which he wished to solicit the attention of the committee. And first, with respect to the hon. secretary himself; he did not allude to the augmentation of the salary of his chief office; that had been already pretty well canvassed in the House, and the discussion had been attended with the wished for effect; he alluded to other offices held by him. As secretary to the charity for poor widows and orphans he received a salary of 200*l.* per annum, and he was allowed an assistant at 100*l.* per annum. Now, he wished to put one question to the hon. secretary, but he must first say there was no man more willing than himself to admit that the office which he held of secretary of the admiralty was a most laborious office, and one which was highly useful to the country. But he would ask him, whether the minor offices,—admitting the great efficiency of the principal office, and if the efficiency was great it must be admitted that it had great emoluments, though these emoluments were now somewhat less than they were a short while ago—whether, for instance, the duties of the office of secretary to the charity to widows was laborious, in proportion to the pay? He asked this, because though 200*l.* a year was not so great a sum as 3000*l.*, it was yet a great sum, and it struck him that the assistant, with 100*l.* a year, might be competent to discharge the whole duties of his own office, and that of his principal. They would find that the assistant's salary had been augmented exactly 100 per cent.; from 50*l.* to 100*l.* Now, if the assistant's salary was thus doubled, he could not help indulging a hope that that assistant would be found able to discharge the whole of the duty, and that they would thus be allowed to strike off the whole of this 200*l.* per ann. [Hear, hear!]—There was also a separate paymaster of widows' pensions. He would allow it was necessary that this office should be filled by a person of responsibility. But was not the responsibility of one as good as that of two? Yet they would find 200*l.* set down to the hon. gentleman as secretary to the widows' charity, and 600*l.* to the paymaster of widows' pensions. He knew it might be said these were two different branches; the one was a charity to widows, and the other pensions to the widows of officers. Allowing this distinction, they would find, however, on looking into the estimates of 1813, that the paymaster of widows' pensions had only a salary of 200*l.* without any clerk, whereas he had now one at 80*l.* per annum. This of course would admit of explanation, and he should be happy to hear it explained. There was a charge for the inspector of telegraphs of 500*l.* Nothing was yet said as to whether this item would be abandoned or not. The hon. gentleman would spare him any farther observations on this subject, by saying that the vote would be taken with the exclusion of this 500*l.* [Mr. Croker here signified his dissent]. Then, if the hon. gentlemen would not leave out this, he would object to the estimate, as there were now no telegraphs to inspect; and besides, there was here an increase from 300*l.* to 500*l.* or of 2-5ths. The next head, that of messengers, was only 920*l.* a year; but small as the sum seemed, there ought to be some reasons given why there was not here a considerable abatement—why the report of the commissioners of naval inquiry on this subject had not been attended to. They had reported that there ought to be only four messengers; there were now, however, six. They had also reported that these four messengers ought only to have salaries of 120*l.* 60*l.* 50*l.* and 40*l.* amounting in all to 270*l.* a year. This year it had pleased his majesty's ministers, however, to lay before the House estimates, in which these six messengers were entered; one at 280*l.*; four at 150*l.*; and one at 40*l.*; making in the whole, instead of the 270*l.* recommended in the report no less a sum than 920*l.* Now, he wished to know why the committee in question had been so disregarded as it was in this instance, in the very teeth of their report?

He would pass over several items to come to the last, that of the office of paymaster of the royal marines; and he would solicit the attention of the committee to a report of a committee in 1785, recommending the business of this office to be carried on in that of the paymaster of the navy, not merely from a regard to economy, but from the facility which it would give to the public service. It was true, a committee of the council differed from the committee to which he had alluded; but if the ministers were to shelter themselves under the report of the committee of council, they ought to adopt the whole of that report, and not merely that particular part of it which suited them; they ought to follow it out in all its recommendations. What did the committee of council say in their report? That the office should be regulated by reducing the salaries and keeping it at the very lowest ebb. They recommended in the first place, that the paymaster should, instead of 1000*l.* be allowed only 600*l.* a year. Now, he would first ask, why the paymaster, whose office, on the recommendation of a committee appointed under an act of parliament, ought to have been abolished, and whose salary, on the recommendation of a committee of council, ought to have been reduced to 600*l.* a year, was to receive 400*l.* a year more? Then came the first clerk, the second clerk, the clerk in the barrack branch, three extra-clerks at 140*l.* each, and a messenger, making the whole of the branch amount to 1340*l.* exclusive of the salary of the council. Now, the next question he would ask was, why these persons were to be continued, contrary to the recommendation of the parliamentary committee, and agreeably to the recommendation of the committee of council; and why they were not to be paid at the rate of wages recommended by that last committee? They recommended the others to be reduced in a similar proportion, so that the whole should only amount to 720*l.* a year instead of 1340*l.* The whole result of the argument was this; that whereas, out of the fulness of their love of retrenchment, an extraordinary resolution of economy had been adopted by ministers since last Monday se'nnight, from what motives he would leave the House to judge, in consequence of that resolution they had thought proper to recommend to the House an augmentation of salaries to a number of officers of double their proper amount. There were some other branches of the expenditure at which he was rather surprised. There was one item of 5000*l.* for parish duties, taxes, firing, postage of letters, &c. In 1813 this was only 3000*l.* There was another office respecting which, he wished for some explanation. He observed 1000*l.* set down to the vice-admiral of Scotland, and the charge of his office. If he had not seen these charges so stated, he should never have thought of asking here for any explanation. He should have thought it was one of those sinecures which were but too frequent in this country, and in no part of it more than in Scotland. There many offices without duties had long been held by descent, and the occupants, from the earliest period of their career as sinecure pensioners, never had occasion to sign one paper, except the receipt for their salary. That lord Cathcart, as vice-admiral of Scotland, should enjoy a sinecure of 1,000*l.*, would not have surprised him; but knowing this to be a sinecure office, and that his lordship had no other duty to discharge than merely to sign a receipt for his salary, he owned he was not a little surprised to see, on the face of the estimate, that the 1,000*l.* was not merely a salary, but a compensation for the charges of his office. It now turned out, that he was under a mistake in supposing this to be a sinecure, and that the vice-admiral of Scotland was an officer of great and meritorious functions.—For the sake of the profession to which he belonged, he was happy to see so ample a provision for "disbursements of the assistants to the counsel of the navy in law suits, &c." The public would now learn that they paid for the luxury of law in this department no less than 10,000*l.* a year, besides 400*l.* a year to an assistant to the counsel, and 100*l.* to a counsel, the assistant here riding the principal. He should wish to be favoured with the items of this 10,000*l.* This was a subject which was of course better known to professional gentlemen than to the country in general. The law expenses of government amounted, in many departments, to many thousands a year. The navy was 10,000*l.*; and the mint was, he believed a great deal more. It had been his misfortune to see a little of the details of the way in which the public money was expended in law suits. He did not mean to say that claims should be thoughtlessly given up to avoid litigation; that was not the objection which he had to make; but that which he would state to the committee was from his own observation, and times without number he had not only remarked it, but stated it to his friends, who had agreed with him in opinion on the subject; namely, that there was a profusion in the manner in which money was squandered in government law suits, which would be reckoned insanity in any private individual, however rich; that where the wealthiest individual, and the most prone to indulge in the luxury of law; the man with the keenest relish for that sport, and the greatest means to gratify it; would be contented with two counsel, or three at most, he had never seen a government cause carried on with fewer than five, six, or seven counsel. Having been in most of the courts of the country, and travelled one of the circuits where there were more crown prosecutions than in most in England, the result of his observations was, that where an individual employed one counsel, government employed always two, and often three; and where an individual adduced two or three witnesses, government often brought forward twenty or thirty. The government bills, therefore, compared with those of the wealthiest individuals, were extravagance and profusion.

With respect to the point of superannuated and temporary clerks, his right hon. friend had complained of the system of superannuation, and stated nine instances of superannuation of clerks, the eldest of which was only 52, the next 44, another 27, and another 22—and that two clerks retired on the considerable salary of 150*l.* a year, in the bloom of youth, when they were capable of turning themselves to any other employment. This 150*l.* was equal to the half-pay of a major, and the circumstance required an answer. True, said the hon. gentleman, there had been these superannuations, but the two first on the list had served, one 37, the other 35 years. If the one was only 44 years of age, he did not see how he could have served 35 years. It was true when a man was old at 22, he might be considered in the prime of life at 9—[laugh.] A man bending under the load of his years at the moment when he was 22, might at 9 years of age be fit for the most arduous service. But said the hon. gentleman, these clerks were not removed to make way for others, for none were appointed in their room. Now, he would ask one question, which if answered would put an end to the discussion. When seven clerks were superannuated, he might say he appointed no new ones; but he had another way of managing matters, the converting temporary clerks into permanent clerks. The seven clerks who had hitherto been only temporary were made permanent, with all the advantages of permanent over temporary situations. This question, then, remained to be answered: had he not converted such temporary into permanent clerks?

But he had been drawn away from sinecure places; and on the mention of this, he had no doubt an hon. baronet opposite (sir George Warrender) and two other hon. gentlemen would immediately spring up. Not that that hon. baronet was without employment. They had heard him, the other night, bring forward, with great ability, a statement of the estimates in the department to which he belonged [a laugh]. The other gentlemen also considered themselves bound to make a speech occasionally in that House. But, with every disposition not to apply to them the hard name of sinecure placemen, he was afraid he could not give them any thing else, if he had a due regard to accuracy of expression, and wished to call them by their right name. He meant to state his doubts, whether these three gentlemen contributed any efficient assistance to the country, as lords of the admiralty [Hear, hear!]. These three lords were what were called the civil lords. The office consisted of the first lord, three sea lords, officers of great professional eminence and services. So far as regarded the first lord, he was a responsible officer —he had to superintend and guide the great machine the works of which were the astonishment of Europe. So far as he was concerned, and the sea officers who assisted him, he would be the last man to propose they should not be well and handsomely paid. But he complained that here, as in too many instances, the salaries were utterly disproportioned to the duties to be discharged. The three naval lords were paid too little, as the responsibility rested principally on their head; for though the first lord and the administration to which he belonged were nominally responsible, the three naval lords had on their own heads a responsibility of a very different nature. And he would ask, what would be the feeling of the House and the country if (which God forbid!) any disaster should take place at sea? and on whom would the pure responsibility fall? The real blame would fall on the three naval lords; and these three men, in the excess of our economy, were paid only at the rate of 1000*l.* each, while we also paid three other men 1000*l.* each for doing nothing [Hear, hear!].—This was the usual way of prodigals and spendthrifts; they gave always too little to those who deserved much, and too much to those who deserved nothing. These civil lords were nothing but sinecure placemen, though their names now and then might, no doubt, garnish a report. He contended, however, that it ought to be made out to the country that they did not merely lend their names, but that they actually did some work before they ought to get 1000*l.* a year each. He had heard, that it was the practice when there were any papers which required the signatures of the civil lords, the nature of which it was wished to keep secret, to send them to these lords with a part folded down, so that they knew not what it was to which they affixed their names. This he had heard from authority, which he could not doubt; and he had also been informed, that one of these lords had once felt so hurt at this proceeding, that when a paper in that state was presented to him for signature, he had tendered his resignation. The fact was, that these three lords were holders of sinecures, so far as the public was concerned: duties they had indeed to perform, but not such as the public ought to pay for—duties of great use to the right hon. gentleman and noble lord, who were the leaders of the ministry in that House. To attend to make a House at four o'clock—to vote (as their consciences directed them, no doubt), on questions of economy—to vote against the admiralty job, which had been discussed the other night, or in favour of it —to vote for or against their own existence, as their conscience bad them— these were their duties. But, important as they were to some persons, they were not such duties as the public should pay for. Those should pay them who profited by them; but they should not be paid by the public at the same rate as the more efficient naval lords—they should not be paid at all.

The hon. and learned gentleman said, that had it not been for the pledge which he had given of sifting the estimates to the bottom, and the paramount duty of redeeming that pledge, he should not have trespassed so long on the attention of the committee. The House itself had given a pledge on the first night of the session, and the chancellor of the exchequer had challenged the House to examine every part of the public expenditure. He (Mr. B.) had endeavoured to redeem the share which he had borne in that pledge, and to meet that challenge which had been given, and nothing remained for him but to express his heartfelt conviction, that unless the committee supported the investigation of the minutest parts of those estimates—unless the independent part of the House redeemed the pledge which had been re-echoed from the speech which had been put into the mouth of the sovereign—they would only amuse the public, deceive themselves, and forfeit their promises to the nation.

Mr. *Croker* said, if it had not been that the hon. and learned gentleman had of late assumed a tone and manner not only unusual in that House, but scarcely to be tolerated in society [Hear, hear!], he should have felt some surprise at the extraordinary attack he had made on the character of his hon. friends.

Mr. *Brougham* rose to order. He said, it was very painful to hear himself so attacked for any expression which he might have used in the course of the debate. He thought he had made no more than a plain, dry, minute statement [Hear, hear, and a laugh from all sides of the House]. He appealed to the committee,—he flung himself upon the committee, and would ask whether there was any one member who could say that any thing which he had stated deserved the expression of the hon. gentleman opposite—for he begged the expression to be noticed, as it was quite new to him to hear it said within the walls of the House, that it would not have been tolerated in private company.

Mr. *Croker* asked, whether it was a plain, dry, minute statement of facts, whether it was parliamentary, whether it was just in point of fact, or decent in point of form, to impute to members that convenient kind of conscience which could support ministers on all occasions? Would any such expression have been tolerated in private company as that used by the hon. and learned gentleman, when he talked of the convenient kind of conscience which persons connected with government had, on subjects discussed in that House [Hear, hear!]. He wished to know, whether the hon. and learned gentleman meant to justify the reflections he had made on the motives of his hon. friends, or the sneers with which he had insinuated that they possessed accommodating consciences. If he rightly understood the hon. and learned gentleman's gesture, and if he abandoned that which he had said, he should make no farther observations.

Mr. *Brougham* said, he did not mean to abandon any thing that he had said.—He was proceeding to make some further statement, but was obliged to sit down, by cries of Order! and Spoke, spoke!

Mr. *Bennet* rose to order. He protested against the menacing manner of the hon. gentleman on the other side of the House [Loud cries of Order, order!].

Lord *Binning* said, it was the duty of every member who spoke to order to state, in what the usual course of parliamentary proceeding had been deviated from. He had heard nothing in breach of order from his hon. friend (Mr. Croker), although he had been twice called to order; he therefore requested the chairman to protect his hon. friend from such interruptions.

Mr. *C. W. Wynn* said, that if the sense of the committee was to be taken, he thought it could not be disputed that it was disorderly to say that any member "had abandoned an insinuation." Such words were not consistent with the mode of proceeding in that House [Cries of, Why not?].

Mr. *Brogden* (the chairman) submitted, that when a breach of order was complained of, the particular instance should be stated, and that the words should be ordered to be taken down, so that the sense of the committee might be taken upon the case.

Mr. *Croker* then proceeded.—But for the circumstance which he had stated, he would have heard such insinuation with astonishment, and he was therefore sorry that he had been mistaken in supposing the hon. gentleman meant to retract it. Such an insinuation, as that there were many members of the House who voted for every measure of government, whether they thought it right or wrong, was one which he heard most indignantly [Hear, hear!], and he felt it so, not only as being applied to his hon. friends around him, but as affecting the character and dignity of parliament. He would appeal to the noble lords on the other side of the House who had held similar situations to those of the members alluded to by the hon. gentleman, whether they would not have been most strongly moved by any such insinuation as the abandonment of any part of their public duty for some paltry private consideration. There were none to whom he would more confidently appeal on this subject than to those gentlemen who sat in the board of admiralty formed during the year of 1806,—than whom there were individually no more respectable or honourable men,—he would appeal to them, whether, in a similar situation, they would not have treated such an insinuation as a foul calumny? [Hear, hear]. But to go to the question before the committee—the hon. gentleman said, that he (Mr. Croker), made temporary clerks permanent by a sort of legerdemain. Now, on this subject, he begged to repeat what he had stated some nights ago, and again to night, that since there had been any prospect of peace he had not added one clerk to the establishment—that he had refused many of those cases in which individuals had those claims upon him, which might have been thought the most forcible. The hon. and learned gentleman had talked too of a sinecure office which he held, besides his situation as secretary of the admiralty—namely, secretary to the widows' fund; an office far from being a sinecure, and the salary of which was the same now as it had been fixed in 1739, namely, 200*l.* a year, out of which he allowed a portion to his clerk; and of this salary he had received neither more nor less than each of his predecessors had done.—As to the observations of the hon. and learned gentleman on the salary of the clerks of this fund, the cause of their having been lately increased was an arrangement which had been made within the last few years for paying the pittance of the poor widows at their own doors, instead of putting them, as formerly, to the trouble and expense of coming to London. As to the paymaster of widows' pensions, and the paymaster of marines, in 1813, papers had been laid before the House, which had been so satisfactory, that an hon. gentleman, who had intended to regulate those offices by a bill, had abandoned his design. The salary of the paymaster of widows' pensions had been increased from 200*l.* to 600*l.*, because the disposal of 80,000*l.* of public money, of which he formerly had the advantage, had been taken from him. This officer was obliged to find security to the amount of 20,000*l.* If the office of paymaster of marines and of paymaster of widows' pensions were added to the office of treasurer of the navy, much inconvenience would ensue, and the expense would moreover be much increased. The duty of barrack-master had been added of late years to that of paymaster of marines, and this change had saved the public 20,000*l.* in two years. The officer had nothing to do with the payment of marines when afloat, but was confined to their payment when they were with their divisions, so that the duty was increased in time of peace rather than lessened. If any doubts remained respecting this office, he should move for the reprinting of the paper which was laid before the House in 1813. The vice-admiral of Scotland was one of the great officers preserved to Scotland by the act of union, and therefore could not be touched. He happened also to know that there was some business attached to it, as writs had been issued from it of late, but to what extent he could not take upon himself to state. As to the law expenses, the name of Mr. Jervis was sufficient to assure the House that there had been no unwarrantable profusion in that department. The salary of 400*l.* a year to the solicitor, and a standing fee of 100*l.* to the counsel, were the only permanent charges, and the whole of the expenses on that score were on the lowest possible scale. The inspector of telegraphs had always had the same salary as at present. The office would soon be abolished altogether, and he would then receive only the allowance authorized by act of parliament. The superannuation allowances which had been given to the different clerks, were according to the order in council of 1800, in approbation of which the House had lately heard so much from the other side. The increase of the salaries paid to clerks, had only been from 78,000*l.* to 85,000*l.* The mistake had arisen from the navy pay office being included in the calculation by the right hon. gentleman opposite (Mr. Tierney), while this office had been in fact regulated by an order of an old date.

Mr. *Tierney* said, he was desirous that the committee should come to a specific understanding of the question before them. The matter in discussion was briefly this—that in 1814 there were 445 clerks, and in 1816 only 421; notwithstanding which, by these estimates, the salaries of this reduced number of clerks would cost the country very nearly 15,000*l.* more than it had incurred for the same purpose in 1814.

Mr. *Croker* admitted that the question certainly was, as to the increase of numbers and expense, and he defied him to disprove the statements which he made in both points: they were actually printed in the estimates before the House. The right hon. gentleman accused the admiralty of an increase in this year over the last, and yet it was with the year 1814 he now chose to make his comparison, that he might have the advance of the increase of two years additional length of revenue; but even with this allowance, the right hon. gentleman's statements were wholly irreconcileable with the facts and documents.

Mr. *Tierney* again rose to express his opinion as to the course which the committee should pursue in coming to the vote. He should propose that these estimates be voted for six months only, instead of a year. His view in this was to give time for government to reconsider them, or that they might be revised by a committee, which was likely to produce a more satisfactory result than any general vote of the House.

Mr. *Bankes* was aware of the extreme difficulty of coming to any satisfactory result even in a committee; but he conceived there was an important question of principle which should first be decided. It was this,—whether the committee would, under all the circumstances of the country, allow of such an increase of salary, whether that excess was 3000*l.* or 7000*l.* or, indeed, any other sum. It was admitted, that there was an excess upon the whole, though a reduction of the number of persons employed had taken place. What pretence could there possibly be for this, at a period when the people were in extreme distress, and when all those who received fixed salaries were, in consequence of circumstances over which they had no control, in a situation infinitely better than they were during the war? And was this particular year to be selected for the increase of their salaries, when almost all the other classes of society were suffering from a diminution of income? He should wish therefore to restrict the vote to the sum which these officers had before May last, and he should propose an amendment to that effect. In addition to the circumstances arising from the pressure of the times, this also should be taken into account, that these persons had in fact 10 per cent. added to their income by the removal of the income tax. As far as he was able to understand the estimates, there was not a single reduction proposed in these salaries. The principle acted upon was, *vestigia nulla retrorsum.* The hon. secretary had stated, that in the selection of the clerks to be retained, he had a painful duty to perform, which, however, he felt bound to perform, that the country might not be burthened with more clerks than were necessay. This might be very true, and the committee must also do the same thing with regret and reluctance; but they were the guardians of the public purse, and it was incumbent upon them to bring down the establishments of the country, not in such a way as might suit the convenience of the officers, but as corresponded to the real business of the country. He recollected when on a finance committee, to have found great difficulty in convincing some gentlemen, self-evident as the proposition might appear, that offices were created for the benefit of the public, and not for the emolument of the holders. Indeed, when the interest of the public came in competition with that of individuals, he had too often found that the former was neglected: but he trusted this would not be the case on the present occasion. Of course there must be many persons thrown out of employment on the return of peace, and he wished to see whether the House would sanction a continually increasing, and what appeared to him, unnecessary expense. If, then, he knew the amount of the excess of expense that was created by this estimate, he should move that this excess be struck off. The right hon. gentleman's proposal was liable to this objection, in his mind, that it was improper to sanction the excess at all, even for the period of six months. He wished the further proceedings to be postponed till to-morrow, when his hon. friend, the secretary for the admiralty, would have ascertained and be able to state the exact amount of the excess, and what the salaries of the present number of clerks were last year. He should then be enabled to take the sense of the House on the excess proposed.

Mr. *Brogden* (the chairman) said, it might be for the convenience of the committee to state, that the vote at present before them was for 10,850*l.*, being the amount of salaries proposed to be paid to the clerks in the admiralty office.

Mr. *Croker* observed, that the amount of the salaries of the 28 clerks now retained might be stated as having last year been 9000*l.* it might be a few pounds more or less.

Mr. *Tierney* contended, that the committee would be perfectly safe in voting half of the proposed salaries that night, as they thus kept the other half in reserve, which they might regulate as they pleased. This mode of voting would not, therefore, sanction the principle of the increase, while it would unite all those who objected to the excess. It would be better that government should withdraw the estimates for re-consideration, and this would be the more easy to the noble lord, as he had been lately in the habit of withdrawing his estimates. Still he would withdraw his amendment, if there was an understanding that the committee must divide on all the other amendments of which gentlemen had given notice. Of this kind was the amendment of his hon. friend for taking away the salaries of the two civil lords of the admiralty, which, notwithstanding the outcry raised against it, he, for one, was prepared to support.

Lord *Castlereagh* could not comprehend how the right hon. gentleman's object would be better attained by referring back the estimates to the consideration of ministers, without their having any sufficient clue to the sentiments of the committee on the subject. It would be perfectly easy for government to withdraw the estimates; but he was not convinced by any argument he had heard, that their amount was at all inexpedient. It was unfair to state that this additional expense would be fastened for ever on the country in time of peace. It had been unequivocally stated by his hon. friend (Mr. Croker), that although the number of clerks in the admiralty office had been only reduced to 28, it was maintained to that amount, simply on the ground which had rendered necessary a similar proceeding in other public departments, namely, that they could not be dismissed for the first year or two after the war, without leaving all the accounts in confusion, and thus doing incalculable injury to the public service. His hon. friend opposite had fallen into the same error as the right hon. gentleman, on this part of the subject. So far was he (lord Castlereagh) from considering, that by agreeing to the proposed vote, parliament would be pledged to continue the establishment permanently, that he was decidedly of opinion that at the expiration of the year, the House would not be bound to agree to retain a single clerk, who might be deemed unnecessary. If at the end of the year it should be found that the number of clerks which it was now proposed to keep, was too great, no vote on the present occasion could preclude parliament from reducing them to one half, if in their wisdom they should think proper so to do. His hon. friend (Mr. Croker) had opened the case so clearly, that it was unnecessary for him to dilate upon the various particulars of it; and in no point had his hon. friend been more successful than in his general defence of the tendency of the proposed system to equalize the allowances of the different classes of public officers, in such a manner as to relieve the lower descriptions from that state of abject poverty, which was inconsistent, not only with the consideration due to the individuals in question, but with true economy in the wisest interpretation of the term. This principle of increasing the emoluments of the lower classes of public officers at the expense of the higher, and more particularly of increasing their salaries at the progressive rate of 10*l.* annually, had in other public departments met with the countenance of his hon. friend (Mr. Bankes), and he was not aware of any difference of circumstances which could excite his hon. friend's hostility to it in the present instance. He repeated, that his majesty's ministers were most anxiously desirous to economise to all the extent that was consistent with their public duty. No feeling of pride or reluctance would prevent them abandoning their own views, if they should be convinced that they were not sound. But he owned he could not persuade himself that the objections which had been urged on the present occasion were valid; and in his opinion all who looked at the subject of economy, not in the narrow way in which by some honourable gentlemen it appeared to be considered, but with the liberal and enlarged feeling which ought to operate in all questions of a public nature, must be convinced that the proposition submitted to the committee was one which it was proper in the first instance to adopt, and that the adoption of it would by no means shut out either parliament or his majesty's government from any future modification, which circumstances might render necessary. Such being the impression on his mind, and the proposed arrangement being that which in the exercise of their best judgment his majesty's government thought the best calculated to benefit the public, all that they could do was to take the sense of the committee upon it.

Mr. *Bankes* then moved, that the chairman should report progress, and ask leave to sit again. He said, he would also move, that it be an instruction to the committee not to allow any increase of salaries beyond what they were in May last.

Mr. *Plunkett*, in rising to address the committee, was too well aware of the lateness of the hour, to encroach at any length on their time. At the same time he felt it would be doing injustice to his own feelings, to the interests of his constituents, and the sacred rights of British subjects, not to express the sentiments he entertained on the line of conduct adopted by administration. Before proceeding further, he would beg leave to ask, whether the salaries of the secretaries of the admiralty were to be regulated by the difference between a state of peace and war? or, in other words, whether the salary of Mr. Croker was to be reduced to 3,000*l.* in peace? [This question being answered in the affirmative, the hon. and learned member proceeded] He was gratified to learn that this distinction had at last been reluctantly acceded to by his majesty's ministers. The line of conduct adopted by the noble lord, was one of the most extraordinary that the House of Commons or the British nation had ever witnessed in any minister of the Crown. On a former occasion when that distinction had been pressed in a forcible manner on the attention of the House by an hon. member (Mr. Methuen), the noble lord had decidedly given his negative to it; and yet now, with an inconsistency which must strike even the most careless observer, he gave it his support. He called on the noble lord, he called on his honourable colleagues in office, he called on the gentlemen who usually supported his measures, to say, if in that line of conduct there had been the least justice or fairness [Cheers]. He called on country gentlemen on the opposite side of the House to lay their hands on their hearts, dispassionately to weigh every circumstance which had characterized the proceedings of the noble lord, and to ask themselves how they could, consistently with a regard to conscience, face their constituents, and say they had honestly done their duty [Hear!]? He would not impute to the noble lord any unworthy motives. He would not for one moment suppose that he was actuated by any desire of degrading that House in the eyes of the world. He trusted in God there would never be a public functionary in Britain who would be capable of such conduct. But when he considered the procedure of the noble lord—when he contemplated the inconsistency which had characterized him throughout, he would appeal to the feelings of every honest man in that House, whether there was not an evident design to oppose whatever was proposed on his (Mr. Plunkett's) side of the House, without the smallest regard whether what was proposed was right or wrong [Cheers]? The hon. member for Wiltshire had proposed a measure which the noble lord reprobated as improper, and yet next day he comes down to the House and adopts the very measure he had reprobated. It was high time for gentlemen accustomed to follow in his train to think whether in consistency with their own credit, as British senators, with their fidelity to their constituents, and, he would add, with their dignity as men, they could any longer be so blinded by prejudices as to become the tools of the noble lord. For he would ask, how did the noble lord use them? He gave them the odium of supporting measures which he afterwards took to himself the grace of retracting [Loud cheers]. He regretted that he was under the necessity of saying so much, but he felt it his duty, and should certainly have considered himself guilty of an omission of duty had he not spoken. He would not believe, indeed it was impossible for him to believe, that gentlemen wished to degrade the House of Commons, but how could they vote in consistency with their own character if they for one moment considered the tactics of the noble lord. The resolution for economy was now agreed to. This was so far very well; but why was it not agreed to before? The answer was obvious. It was for the best of all possible reasons—because the noble lord and his colleagues would not suffer so dangerous a term as the word economy to be registered on the journals of that House; for had that resolution been there the noble lord and his friends were in danger [Cheers.]. But now it was quietly allowed to slip in [Hear, hear!]. In a very fine pompous manner the committee were told of the difference between the last year of war and the first year of peace. No doubt the expense of the first year of peace must be admitted to equal those of the last year of war. But there were elements for retrenchment which a minister alive to the interests of his country would lay hold of. These had in a satisfactory manner been pointed out by his right hon. friend (Mr. Tierney), who, in a manner that must flash conviction on every mind, had, item by item, showed that instead of being lessened they were increased. No symptoms whatever of a voluntary nature were shown by government for any retrenchment. Government now stood in the situation of men on their trial. Clamour, an ignorant impatience for relaxation from taxation, and a thousand similar motives had been applied to the people for expressing their detestation of the policy of ministers. But he called on gentlemen in that House, whose minds were unfettered by prejudice, he called on them in conscience to say, whether they could believe ministers had ever one serious thought of retrenchment had it not been for this clamour, this "ignorant impatience [Loud cheers]."—He would tell the noble lord that that clamour had compelled him to do his duty so far, and might perhaps, if he did not take care, clamour him out of office [Cheers]. A very nice distinction had been made between clamour out of doors and clamour within door. To the latter of these he would call the attention of the committee, and he would ask, what did they think it meant? Why, it was simply this. Had the members who presented petitions—or rather the remonstrances of ignorant impatience—to the House, ushered them quietly, with all that suavity and smoothness so happily practised on the opposite side, there would have been no clamour. But because they did, in a manly, constitutional manner, scorn to abandon their duty,—because they had introduced the clamours of the people, excited by the dereliction of the ministers from their fidelity—because they had often made these walls to re-echo with their determined opposition to the attempts made to press down a people already worn out, they were charged by the noble lord with making a clamour. The people had, however, assembled and asserted their rights; they had expressed their abhorrence of a most detestable, unjust, and inquisitorial tax; they had declared their indignation at the attempt of the government to cover the soil of the country with armies;—in a word, they had called loudly and unanimously for retrenchment and economy; and the members of that House would grossly abandon their duty, if they did not attend to the voices of their constituents. This might be clamour in the opinion of the noble lord, but let the country gentlemen remember, that it was in consequence of these sentiments re-echoed through the country, that any thing had been obtained. The people had put their representatives on their trial, and the House had been electrified. The noble lord and his colleagues were doubtless alarmed at these proceedings; but there was a general cry for retrenchment and economy which could not be put down. The noble lord might attempt it, but the result of his experiment would be, that the voice of the people would be raised more loudly, and they would very soon put down him and his colleagues [Loud and repeated cheering].

Lord *Castlereagh* said, that no one could possibly feel more than he did, the importance of the great question of public economy, nor was more disposed to admit that it was a question which must be ultimately determined by the public voice of the country, and by the independent sense of parliament. He certainly had never presumed to denominate that public voice, or that independent sentiment of parliament, as clamour; but he did consider as clamour, and nothing better than clamour, the attempt to set up the dictum of the other side of the House as the standard of those measures which the government might view as wise and proper to be adopted. He was always ready to defer to the opinion of Parliament, because he knew that it was his duty to do so both as a minister of the Crown and as a member of that House; but he should think he completely failed in that duty if he yielded merely to the systematic opposition of the hon. gentlemen opposite; for he was sufficiently convinced, that let the government propose whatever it might, they would resist it in the hope of obtaining a triumph [Hear, hear!]. A proof of that disposition had been conspicuously manifested in the very estimates which were now under consideration. What was the conduct of the right hon. gentleman on the first night of their being discussed? "Listen to me," he exclaimed, "and I will show you a *primâ facie* case, sufficient to justify every suspicion of the extravagant intentions of government, sufficient to refuse going into a committee at all upon the estimates as proposed, and to insist upon their being sent back for reconsideration." And what was the result of that *primâ facie* case thus pompously announced? In the first place, if taken upon the broad ground, it had nothing whatever of truth in it; and in the second place, if taken upon the narrow ground, it negatived the right hon. gentleman's own conclusion. What was the amount of his argument? That because no reduction appeared in the first year of peace, there was therefore a *primâ facie* case against ministers, which ought to make that House refuse going into any committee. The government was not even to be permitted to be heard in its own defence, and all the ordinary forms of parliament were to be abandoned. Nothing would satisfy the right hon. gentleman, but carrying the war at once into the enemy's quarters; now, however, his tone was quite altered, and all his lofty vehemence had subsided into gentle moderation. To have supported his *primâ facie* case, he ought to have been able to prove, that in the first year of peace there was always a great reduction in the expenditure of that particular department; but as he could do no such thing, he now retired from the combat, and was forced to confess that he had made out no *primâ facie* case at all. The fact was, that such a principle as had been assumed by the right hon. gentleman would not be found in any period of our history; for there was no instance where the charge had been less during the first year of peace than it was during the last year of war. The right hon. gentleman's argument was therefore completely knocked on the head; and from the tactics pursued on that occasion, he could be at no loss to judge of the sort of issue which would result from taking the dictum and clamour of the opposite side of the House, as the guide for regulating the measures of government [Hear, hear!].—He should now address himself to the observations which had fallen from the hon. and learned gentleman who spoke last, and he could assure him that he always felt the greatest respect and deference for his arguments on every occasion. The hon. and learned member had made two parties in the question, and he should first of all examine whether the hon. member for Wiltshire, or those who voted with the government upon his motion, had any right to complain of its conduct. What was the course pursued by that hon. member? He brought forward a proposition for economy, which affected, not the service at large, but went only to the consideration of the salaries of the secretaries to the admiralty. He (lord Castlereagh) marked the distinction, and urged it to the House, observing, that they were not then discussing the great principles of economy and retrenchment, but merely a single case. He took the question merely as it had been presented to parliament by the hon. member himself, not, probably, from his own discretion, for he doubtless derived much assistance, and much learning upon the subject, from the wise and luminous sources of the opposite side of the House [Hear, hear!]. At all events, he certainly could not think that the hon. member, or any who voted on that night, had just reason to complain of ministers, for they were willing to admit the very principles which had been laid down, namely that the order in council should apply to the secretaries of the admiralty, but not to the clerks. Of the wisdom and humanity of that distinction he still entertained precisely the same opinion; for it would be most unjust to reduce those to a state of destitution who had meritoriously devoted their time and labour for the public service. What was the course, however, which he (lord Castlereagh) pursued on that occasion? Did he call upon the House to negative the motion? No—he merely said, that whatever opinion the House might entertain upon the subject, it should be in a committee that that opinion should be allowed to have it's effect, and not on the discussion upon the motion. He stated, without hesitation, that there existed no disposition on the part of government to maintain those salaries upon a higher scale in time of peace, if the sentiments of the House should appear to be decidedly against it. He did, however, observe a disposition to confine those two offices exclusively within the regulations established by the order in council in 1800, and to that disposition thus manifested, the government yielded. He was justified in concluding, therefore, that every one who voted upon that motion, voted upon the grounds which he had stated; nay, even the hon. gentlemen opposite seemed to concur in the propriety of those grounds; and he firmly believed that no one supported his majesty's ministers that night upon any other principle than because the proceeding of the hon. member for Wiltshire was irregular, and because the committee was the proper place for entering into all the necessary details. Under those circumstances, he could not but think that the hon. and learned member who spoke last, had lent himself a little to the point of impression rather than to the point of argument, and had endeavoured to draw conclusions from the issue of that night's discussion, which the facts connected with the discussion would not warrant.—With respect to the general question, he was certainly of opinion that the principle of instructing the committee not to admit any modifications of salaries, was one too narrow and limited to be acted upon with any beneficial effects to the country. Economy and retrenchment were, he well knew, of the utmost importance at the present moment; the situation of the country required that they should be carried to every practicable extent, consistently with the solid and substantial interests of the state; and the government, he would repeat, were as anxious to accomplish those great objects, as the people could be to see them accomplished; but in proceeding with this measure it was necessary to take care that they did not enforce principles which, with an apparent character of propriety, would, in fact, be injurious to the best interests of the public service.

Mr. *Methuen* intreated the House to consider, whether the noble lord and his colleagues had not been guilty of the greatest extravagance in increasing the salaries of clerks at this moment. The noble lord had often accused the gentlemen opposite of making two parties in the House; but it was the noble lord who was making two parties, and putting the country entirely out of the question. The noble lord had long accustomed himself to a very high tone; but he would not be put down, and he hoped that no other member would suffer himself to be put down by the taunts of the noble lord. As to his motion on a former night, it might not have been extensive enough, but it did not justify his majesty's government in increasing the salaries of these clerks [Hear, hear!].

Mr. *Ponsonby* said, that the noble lord now found a great imperfection in that motion, but he had disliked it as much when it was confined to the secretary of the admiralty. It was difficult to know what the noble lord meant; but it was evident that he wished to deny the House time to consider the subject.

Mr. Tierney then withdrew his amendment, for the purpose of giving way to Mr. Bankes' motion.

A division then took place on Mr. Bankes' motion, That the chairman be directed to report progress, and ask leave to sit again. The numbers were:

For Mr. Bankes's Amendment	85
Against it	163
Majority	—78

List of the Minority.

Abercrombie, hon. J.
Baring, Alex.
Bankes, Henry
Babington, Tho.
Baillie, J. E.
Bennet, hon. H. G.
Birch, Joseph
Brand, hon. T.
Brougham, H.
Barham, Joseph F.
Calley, Thos.
Calvert, Nic.
Calvert, Charles
Carew, R. S.
Caulfield, hon. H.
Campbell, hon. J.
Cavendish, lord. G.
Calcraft, John
Campbell, general
Douglas, hon. F. S.
Duncannon, visc.
Dundas, Charles
Ellison, Cuthbert
Forbes, Charles
Finlay, Kirkman
Folkestone, lord
Fitzgerald, lord. W.
Ferguson, sir R. C.
Fitzroy, lord J.
Gordon, Robt.
Grenfell, Pascoe
Guise, sir Wm.
Grant, John P.
Hughes, W. L.
Hamilton, sir H. D.
Heron, sir Robert
Hornby, E.
King, sir J. D.
Knox, Thos.
Leader, Wm.
Lester, B. L.
Lambton, John
Lefevre, C. S.
Lemon, sir Wm.
Lloyd, J. M.
Lyttelton, hon. W.
Markham, admiral
Marryat, Joseph
Methuen, Paul
Morland, S. B.
Maitland, hon. A.
Molyneux, H. H.
Martin, Henry
Martin, John
Moore, Peter
Mackintosh, sir J.
Newman, R. W.
Newport, sir J.
Neville, hon. R.
Nugent, lord
Osborne, lord F.
Ossulston, lord
Palmer, colonel
Ponsonby, rt. hn. G.
Plunkett, rt. hn. W. C.
Prittie, hon. F. A.
Russell, lord W.
Ramsden, J. C.
Ridley, sir M. W.
Rowley, sir W.
Romilly, sir S.
Sebright, sir J.
Smyth, J. H.
Smith, John
Smith, W.
Stanley, lord
Tierney, rt. hon. G.
Tremayne, John H.
Vernon, Granville
Vyse, R. W. H.
Warre, John A.
Western, Ch. C.
Wilkins, Walter
Waldegrave, hon. C.
Wynn, C. W.

TELLER.
Fremantle, Wm.

On the original question being put,

Mr. *Baring* argued against the allowances proposed for the paymaster of the marines, the paymaster of widows pensions and the inspector of telegraphs, all these being offices, which at present he conceived totally useless, because all the duties assigned to them either closed with the peace, or might be performed by other departments without any expense to the public. He therefore moved as an amendment, that the sum proposed to be voted be 57,623*l.* 16*s.* 7*d.*, thereby leaving out the salaries of the three officers above mentioned.

Mr. *Calcraft* said, that he was surprised to find that no attempt was made to defend those propositions, when

Mr. *Croker* maintained, that he had laid ample grounds for all the measures objected to on a former occasion. The office of paymaster of marines had, since the superabundance of the marine barracks was transferred to that office, been productive of a saving of 20,000*l.* to the public, and there was in these very estimates a proposition for a grant of 1700*l.* to certain barrack masters, as an indemnity to them for what they lost, in consequence of the gain to the public, through the arrangement with respect to the paymaster of marines. Then, as to the paymaster of widows pensions, it was an office of great responsibility. Indeed both were offices of considerable responsibility, the security for the former being 10,000*l.* while that for the latter was 20,000*l.* The allowance to the inspector of telegraphs would not be in the whole absolutely required, as it was expected that the office would cease in two or three months, and of course the surplus of the grant would be applied to the public service.

Mr. *Calcraft* concluded, that the paymaster of the marines had at no time, especially at present, any duty to perform which might not be as well executed by the paymaster of the navy, as had some years ago been proposed by a committee of that House, with the concurrence of the treasurer of the navy. But even if the contrary were held, still he could see no reason why the salary of this officer should be as much now, when he had only 9000 marines to pay, as when he had to attend to 33,000 men in time of war. Indeed, in a short time the marines were to be reduced to 6000. The maintenance, then, of such an office could, in his mind, proceed only from a love of patronage, and an indifference to that economy which ministers were so loud in professing, merely with a view to gull the public. As to the paymaster of widows pensions, he could not conceive the ground upon which such an office was maintained in the navy after a similar office had been abandoned in the army as unnecessary. He concluded with observing, that no more should be voted for the inspector of telegraphs than was likely to be required, and surely ministers could calculate when this officer would be able to wind up his accounts.

Sir *G. Warrender* contended, that as the paymaster of the marines had taken upon himself the duty of inspecting the barracks, if his office should be abolished, another must be created for the latter purpose. As to the paymaster of widows pensions, it was not the amount of the sum, but the number of persons to whom it was to be doled out, and the security which he was to give, which ought to be considered.

Mr. *Rose* said, that the question had been put to him whether the duties of the paymaster of the marines could not be performed by the treasurer of the navy, and that he had answered in the affirmative. But the commissioners of the navy were of a different opinion. They urged that there was no room, and that the arrangement would produce confusion and but a very small saving. These reasons had prevailed with the admiralty.

Mr. *Wynn* considered that the right hon. member's statement, that an office might be abolished, and 1000*l.* per annum saved, was of the highest possible authority. He thought, also, that the duties of paymaster of widows pensions might be performed by the treasurer of the navy. He took the present opportunity of asking for some explanation as to an increase of 2,000*l.* per annum, since 1813, for parish duties; and made some remarks on the office of vice-admiral of Scotland. As the act of union stipulated for the office, but said nothing about any salary, and as the office was a sinecure, he thought the honour of bearing it a sufficient recompence. He should only add, that it had been a subject of triumph on the other side, that his right hon. friend had not contrasted the estimates of 1802 with 1803; but independently that the period alluded to was a time of hollow truce rather than of peace, he would observe, that the establishment for the navy at three different periods of 1802 was 125,000, 88,000, and 70,000, men; now it was 33,000, and yet the expense of the admiralty was to exceed that of 1802.

Mr. *Croker* wished the hon. gentleman to look at the paper laid before the House in 1813, and he would see that it was impossible to transfer the office of the paymaster of the marines into that of treasurer of the navy, without making the latter accountant to himself.

Lord *Folkestone* said, that if a sum were now to be voted for the inspector of telegraphs, who must be reduced in five months, the House had better vote for any demand in gross, and then leave it to ministers to say—"You have voted so much, and we have now to show the amount of our saving." If the House voted the 500*l.* per annum, how did they know the manner in which it would be applied? Perhaps the office would be continued. However small the sum might appear in a question of finance, yet the principle on which it was demanded was most alarming, and required serious consideration.

Lord *Castlereagh* asked if the noble lord conceived it possible for government to say prophetically on what precise day an employment should be given up? If no discretion whatever was to be intrusted to them, the country had better dismiss the administration at once. It was clear the salary of this office would be saved the moment it was abolished.

Mr. *Baring* said, that very few individuals in the country would place any confidence in the economy of his majesty's ministers; but, at all events, the House might make what objections it thought fit; and as it was not stated when the telegraphs would be reduced, it was only left for him to vote against them generally.

Mr. *Vesey Fitzgerald* deprecated the language made use of by an hon. member, that ministers spoke of economy only to gull the people. He, for his own part, was content to be judged by the same tribunal to which gentlemen on the opposite side so often appealed.

Mr. *Calcraft* explained, and repeated his former statement.

Mr. *Tierney* protested against voting a sum of money which it was confessed would not be wanted. We were now in a season of peace, and the telegraphs might be put an end to immediately. The admiralty said they could not name the exact day, but would render an account afterwards. He would ask what became of all the money that had been voted for the navy last year? a large sum must have been saved. But did the admiralty say that the telegraphs might not be reduced in three months? With respect to the paymaster of marines, if ever there was a case on which the public must form a strange idea of their economy, it was this. Official papers stated that it might be abolished in 1813, a time of war; and an experienced treasurer of the navy acceded to this. Some technical objections had been made, but we were now in a season of peace. Gentlemen opposite had nothing to set up but the difficulty of arranging public accounts: one short act of parliament would get rid of all this; and, unskilled as he was in technical forms, he would undertake to frame such an act himself. The salary of the paymaster of marines, in the last peace, was 600*l.*; and if the office was retained now, it was mockery to talk of economy. The secretary of the admiralty had offered to do the work for nothing, and ministers refused. This was the seond day that offers to work for nothing had been rejected!

Lord *Castlereagh* said, that government could have no motive for continuing the charge of 500*l.* but because they could not state the precise day on which it might be expected to cease. The right hon. gentleman, however, had attacked that, as he attacked every thing in what he conceived to be his duty; but whether his opposition was in the spirit of duty or the spirit of discussion, there seemed to be a sort of spell upon him, for he was never right in any one point.

Mr. *Ponsonby* urged the strong necessity of that side of the House continuing laboriously active throughout the session, in watching every item of the public expenditure.

The House then divided upon the amendment, when the numbers were, Yeas, 38: Noes, 124. The original resolution was then agreed to. After which the chairman reported progress, and asked leave to sit again.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Thursday, March 28.

PRINCE OF COBOURG'S NATURALIZATION BILL.] The royal assent was declared by commission to the bill for exhibiting a Bill in the present session of parliament (notwithstanding the operation of certain acts, which prescribe certain preliminary forms) for the naturalization of his serene highness prince Leopold George Frederick of Cobourg Saalfeld, and to settle the order of his precedency. After which, a bill for the naturalizing of his serene highness was brought up from the Commons, by the chancellor of the exchequer, attended by several members, which on the motion of the earl of Westmoreland (all the relevant standing and other orders being continued in suspension) forthwith was passed through all its stages, and a message ordered, to acquaint the Commons therewith.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, March 28.

Leather Tax.] Mr. *Hart Davis* observed, that he had received several letters from persons concerned in the leather trade at Bristol, stating, that in consequence of a rumour that it was the intention of the chancellor of the exchequer to propose the repeal of the leather tax, the leather trade was at a stand; and therefore he thought it necessary to ask the right hon. gentleman, whether this rumour had any foundation?

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* replied, that he had no difficulty in stating, for the information of his hon. friend and others, that his Majesty's government had no such intention as that alluded to; for upon the best consideration it was felt, that whether the leather tax was injurious or not at the time it was imposed, it could not now be repealed without great inconvenience.

Lotteries.] Mr. Thompson moved, "That there be laid before this House, the name and salary of each of the commissioners of the Lottery, and the name and salary of each of the secretaries and clerks, and of every other person in town and country employed under the government in conducting the business of the lottery in the years 1814 and 1815."

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* had no objection to the motion. He said, he was not aware that government employed any persons in the country upon the business of the lottery, whatever the contractors might do.

Mr. *Thompson* observed, that commissioners calling themselves government agents connected with the lottery were spread all over the country. This he knew to be the case, and that such commissioners or agents were in the habit at times of attending in London for only a few days during the drawing of the lottery. This indeed he had himself heard from an attorney near Hull, who described himself as a commissioner of the lottery, and who said that he only attended in London a few days in each year, observing that they (the commissioners) alternately relieved each other. This being the fact, he required to know the names of all those commissioners and agents, together with their salaries.

Mr. *Lyttelton* took that opportunity of expressing his decided objection to the principle of raising money by lottery. An hon. friend of his, now no more (Mr. Whitbread), whose solicitude for every principle connected with public and private morality was proverbial, had expressed a hope, that however the country might endure such a system of raising money during war, it would not be tolerated upon the return of peace. That peace being now concluded, he should feel it his duty to resist the continuance of that system; for he never could be reconciled, merely for the purpose of obtaining 200,000*l.* a year, to tolerate a measure so injurious to the morals of the country.

Mr. *Bennet* cordially concurred in the views of his hon. friend; for after ample inquiry upon the subject (and he could assure the House that he had taken considerable pains to ascertain facts), he felt the fullest conviction, that no pecuniary consideration should reconcile parliament to the existence of a measure so peculiarly calculated, as the system of the lottery in all its branches was, to debauch the morals and corrupt the character of the country—to spread mischief and misery through every town, village, and hamlet. He knew the baneful effects of this abominable system, and he hoped that the benevolence and wisdom of parliament would soon put an end to its existence.

Mr. *M. A. Taylor* said, that many years ago he felt it his duty to bring this subject before the House, and he remembered that the lottery bill would have been lost, if it were not for the commencement of the war. Having been chairman of a committee appointed to inquire into the effects of the lottery, he could testify to its baneful operation; and to that report he would refer those who entertained doubts upon the subject. Upon examining that report, he was convinced that every man of feeling and consideration would concur with him as to the propriety of abolishing lotteries. Indeed, when Mr. Pitt concluded for the lottery after this report was presented, he recommended the commissioners to consult him (Mr. T.) as to the means of remedying the evils described in that report. He felt it however impossible to devise any effectual remedy; but he suggested that if the lottery were drawn within two or three days, the evil might be somewhat reduced. That suggestion was attended to, but the main evil still remained, and would remain, while the system of lotteries was allowed to exist. But as to the motion before the House, he thought it just to remark, that the salary allowed to any commissioner or other agent employed by government on the business of the lottery, was too trifling to induce such officer to reside in town. Neither could he think it necessary to inforce such residence; nor could he, with all his solicitude for economy, approve of the abolition of any of those offices, without granting some compensation to the officers.

The motion was agreed to.

PRINCE OF COBOURG'S NATURALIZATION BILL.] The *Chancellor of the Exchequer*, after adverting to the feelings expressed on both sides of the House with respect to the illustrious personage to whom his motion referred, and the unanimity with which a liberal provision for that prince was acceded to, moved, "That leave be given to bring in a bill for the Naturalization of his serene highness Leopold George Frederick, duke of Saxe, margrave of Meissen, landgrave of Thuringuen, prince of Cobourg of Saalfeld, and settling his precedency."

The bill was then brought in; and, being read a first and second time, went through a committee of the whole House. The report was brought up and agreed to: the bill was read a third time and passed, and ordered to be carried to the lords by the chancellor of the exchequer and other members.

PETITIONS RESPECTING AGRICULTURAL DISTRESS, &c.] Mr. *Methuen* presented a petition of considerable length from the president, vice-presidents, and members of the Wiltshire agricultural society and other land-owners, complaining of Agricultural Distresses and of foreign importations of corn. They stated, that if ever there was a time which called for public economy, it was the present. Mr. Methuen said he felt much satisfaction in presenting this petition from so highly respectable a body, and which was not couched in wanton or presumptuous language. The gentry and yeomanry who had signed it had distinguished themselves by their loyalty and patriotism, and were among those who had supported their country earnestly, while all other nations in Europe were suffering the calamities of the war.

Mr. *Gordon* added his testimony to the great respectability of the petitioners. He wished to call the attention of the vice-president of the board of trade, who, he understood, intended to bring in a bill respecting the duties upon butter. The interests of the petitioners were much connected with the making of cheese. The interests of butter and cheese had hitherto been always considered together, and he saw no reason for separating them now.

Mr. *Robinson* said, that as they were about to go into a committee on the general interests of agriculture, he did not see the necessity of entering into the subject on the receiving of a petition; but he meant to show no inattention or indifference to the matter of the petition.

Colonel *Wood* presented a petition from the county of Brecon, which was signed by almost all the resident gentry of that county. The petitioners complained of the great distress which they laboured under from the unexampled depression in the price of agricultural produce. They prayed also against the clause in the corn act, which permitted the warehousing of foreign corn, free of duty; they earnestly recommended to parliament the absolute necessity of the strictest economy in every department of the state, and of the abolition of all sinecure and useless offices. They also prayed, that if it should be necessary to raise a loan of eight millions, the interest of it might be borrowed from the sinking fund, and no new taxes be imposed.

Mr. *Grenfell* said, there was a subject mentioned in that petition, upon which he should take the liberty of asking a question from the right hon. gentleman opposite. He alluded to the sinking fund: and the question he wished to ask was, whether, in the event of having recourse to a loan, ministers were prepared to avail themselves of the clause in the 26th of the King, commonly called Mr. Fox's clause, and raise the money that might be wanting through the medium of the commissioners for the reduction of the national debt, instead of going into the money market? Unless that course was adopted, he should feel it his duty to submit a proposition to the House, for the purpose of showing the great advantage which the country would receive from that clause being acted upon.

Mr. *Calcraft* observed, that the repeated discussions which had taken place in that House upon the different petitions presented against the property tax, was, he firmly believed, one of the principal causes of its ultimate rejection. He hoped, therefore, that the same discussion and the same attention would take place with regard to the petitions, which were now so thickly and so numerously pouring upon them, praying for retrenchment and economy. A great deal had been said in that House about economy, but very little had yet been done; and he thought they would ill discharge their duty to their constituents, if they neglected their earnest and repeated prayers upon the subject.

Sir *Martin Foulkes* presented a petition from the county of Norfolk, complaining of the agricultural distresses of the country. It stated likewise, that the petitioners saw no necessity for maintaining so large a military force in time of peace, or why the most extensive reduction should not now be practised. They complained also of the never ending excesses of the civil list, and stated that the old English constitution and a standing army could never subsist together.

The petitions were ordered to lie on the table.

COMMITTEE ON THE DISTRESSED STATE OF AGRICULTURE.] Mr. *Western* moved the order of the day for going into a committee of the whole House on the Distressed State of Agriculture.

Lord *Lascelles* said he had no intention of opposing the Speaker's leaving the chair, but he thought it might be convenient if the hon. member would state, before going into the committee, what course he meant to pursue with respect to the resolutions which had been printed. He was anxious to ascertain what ulterior proceedings he intended to propose.

Mr. *Western* observed, that the mode of procedure would be best settled in the committee, though at the same time he could have no objection to state his general views upon the subject. His own opinion was, that in the first instance they should proceed upon a general inquiry into the question, by which means they would extract from the different county members and others who represented the landed interest, those representations which would enable them to judge of the true extent of the distresses. The House would then be better able to judge what remedies might be necessary, and each of the resolutions could afterwards be considered separately.

Lord *Lascelles* said, his reason for asking the question was, because a considerable degree of alarm existed throughout the country, upon the supposition that parliament were about to adopt certain resolutions, upon which a bill might afterwards be brought in, and that bill being of the nature of a tax bill, it was thought they could not petition against it.

Mr. *Robinson* observed, that he thought the mode proposed by the hon. member, was the one most convenient for bringing the subject fully and distinctly under the consideration of the House. The hon. member could move his first resolution either with, or without a prefatory speech, as he might think best, and thus the whole question would be open for deliberation. After that general examination had been gone through they would then dispose of the resolutions separately.

The House having accordingly resolved itself into the committee,

Mr. *Lyttleton* said, he ought to apologize to the committee for taking precedency of the hon. member below him, in offering himself to their attention; but if he did not do so, he felt that he should neglect his duty to his constituents. He alluded to the case of the petition from Worcestershire, which had been presented the preceding day, by his noble colleague (lord Elmley), at a time when the House contained scarcely any members, and when not one of his majesty's ministers was present. He was far from imputing the circumstance to any disposition on the part of the noble lord, whom he did not then see in his place, to deprive his constituents of the benefit of obtaining for their petition a proper hearing; but the practical effect certainly was, to deprive them of that benefit. He should therefore feel it his duty to move that the petition from the county of Worcester be again read.—The petition was accordingly read. It complained of the difficulty which the petitioners found to pay their taxes, in consequence of the depreciation in the value of agricultural property, and of the injury done to the home grower, by the importation of foreign corn; it prayed also for the most rigid economy in the public expenditure, and complained of the lavish waste of money in the erection of public works, under the idea of adding splendour to the realm; an expense which, though it might be proper in a time of affluence, was most seriously to be deprecated in a time of great distress; it complained likewise of a large standing army, the existence of sinecure offices, and the perpetual excesses in the civil list.—The petition being read,

Mr. *Western* rose, and observed, that having already stated the course of proceeding which he thought it would be right to adopt, and having, on a former occasion, entered at much length into the general subject; he should not now have occasion to occupy any great portion of their attention. Their first consideration would be directed to the whole extent of the difficulties and distresses under which the agriculture of the country laboured; a degree of distress and difficulty, which he indeed felt to be excessive, and unparalleled. He had endeavoured to prove that fact on a former occasion, and he was persuaded, that no diminution of the distress had since taken place. He, for one, could not help entertaining a very gloomy view of the prospect that was before us, and believing it to be thus gloomy, he did not think there was any policy in withholding any communications which could place it fully before parliament. What indeed, must be the situation of a country like this, when the land paid no rent, when the wages of labour were not equal to the sustenance of the labourer, and when the profits of agricultural stock were turned into losses? Such, however, was the actual situation of the country, and which in addition, was burthened with a heavy national debt, and an enormous taxation to support establishments of unprecedented magnitude. Was it possible, that any one could view that situation without feeling something like despondency? He would not say, that he absolutely despaired, because he thought the energies and resources of the country, were still sufficient to extricate it from its difficulties if properly applied. They all knew that the rent of land, the wages of labour, and the profits of stock, were the only sources from which the revenue of a country was derived; and what therefore, had they to look forward to? He earnestly called upon the House to consider with due deliberation, the real state to which we were reduced; and having ascertained it, it would then be for the wisdom of parliament to consider what remedy should be applied, in order to restore us to our former prosperity, and enable us to maintain our present greatness. What were the real causes of our distress? They were to be found in the peculiar difficulties which pervaded the agricultural interests of the country within the last two years, and which consequently extended to every other class of society. According to his view of the subject, those difficulties originated, in the first instance, from a fall in the real value of the products of land, and an accumulated surplus of those products beyond the demand for them. The committee were fully aware, that a very small surplus beyond the demand had an inevitable tendency to diminish the value of that surplus, in the same manner as a small deficit below the demand increased the value. They had shown, as a principal cause, the fall in the real value of all the products of the land, and to that was superadded a fall in the nominal value of land. In this country there was a most extensive circulating medium, and a most abundant credit currency, founded upon those products of the land; but the latter having diminished to half their value, the credit currency had, in fact, wholly vanished. The consequence was, that the relative value of the property of individuals had been completely altered: the property belonging to the holders of land was transferred to the holders of money, from those, in fact, who paid taxes to those who received them. Such was our peculiar situation at this moment. There was a time, however, when all the agricultural classes were flourishing: there was an increasing demand for all the products of land: there was an increasing abundance of our circulating medium, whether composed of paper of the bank of England, of the notes of country banks, or of promissory notes. The country went on under that operation; but, as the increase of produce rendered the circulating medium of less value, the agriculturists were paid in a currency of less value. He should follow up this view of the subject by stating, that the original cause of the present distress was, a fall in the real value of the produce of land. That fall had been occasioned by a supply beyond the demand. The House should endeavour, therefore, to furnish the agriculturists with every means of taking off the surplus. It might, perhaps, be practicable to export a considerable quantity; but if they prevented an importation of foreign corn, a very material relief would be afforded.—He would not detain the committee by going further into the subject at that moment, as he hoped, when they came to a vote, they would consider each resolution separately. At present he should abstain from troubling them on any one specific resolution. Since he submitted his propositions to the House, ministers had taken off the war duty on malt; but he did not think they had gone far enough. They should also remove the duties on spirits. He would not venture to urge this measure, if he thought the revenue would derive any benefit from continuing those duties: but, in his opinion, the consumption would be greatly increased. During the two or three last years, when the price of corn was double what it was at this moment, the aggregate amount of duties in Scotland was 740,000*l.* In the last year, when barley was sold at 20*s.* and the duty was raised from 5*s.* to 8*s.*, the amount was only 712,000*l.* instead of 740,000*l.* He was sure the right hon. gentleman could not say that the same amount of duties could be sustained during peace as during war. The practice of bonding spirits would add considerably to the revenue, and the spirits would be better for being kept. Under a firm conviction that this relief could be applied to the agriculturists, without the smallest injury to the revenue, he should sit down with proposing the first resolution, namely, "that the portion of the community, whose capitals are engaged in agriculture, as well as those numerous classes whose employment depends thereon, are at present under the pressure of unexampled distress."

Lord *Castlereagh* suggested the propriety of the hon. member submitting a practical resolution to the consideration of the committee. The appointment of the committee was in itself a sufficient proof that gentlemen were aware of the distress under which the country was labouring, and he therefore thought the hon. member would better attain his object by submitting the consideration of a remedy to the distress, rather than the distress itself.

Mr. *Western*, in consequence of the remark of the noble lord, moved his fourth, fifth, and sixth resolutions: viz. "That the demand for barley has been very materially reduced, by the excessive duties to which it is subjected, in the cause of the various operations which adapt it to the use of the consumer:—that the continuance of those duties, during peace, when the facility of smuggling is so much increased, cannot fail to injure the home manufacture of spirits, which must still further diminish the demand for barley:—that it is therefore necessary to reduce the duties on malt, beer, and spirits."

Mr. *Brand*, in rising at this early period of the discussion, would only offer a general opinion. Of the distress of the country he believed no man could entertain a serious doubt, and he therefore regretted that his majesty's ministers seemed not to have been in possession of its alarming extent. To a well constituted and generous mind no species of distress had more legitimate claims of relief than that of the lower orders in society, from whose scanty portion of comfort no privation, however trifling, could be made without loading them with woe. In the higher walks of life, men were better able to devise means for alleviating or warding off the ills which occasionally might light on them, but to the poor there was no alternative. Many of those now present would recollect the views he had formed last year, of the state of the country, and his predictions of what would be the issue. He had assured the House, that a period would come when the occupation of land would be suspended, and that unless proper and adequate relief was soon applied, the House might have reason to repent of its supineness when relief was no longer applicable. He regretted to say, that in the mournful experience of many, too many in the country, the first of these predictions had been unhappily verified. The calamities which the agriculturists in many parts of the country were enduring, the miseries under which that class were groaning, presented a picture of wretchedness which might rend the most callous heart. There was not an individual, he was persuaded, who heard him, who would not be melted at the simple recital even of a small part of those miseries. Within these few days he had received a letter from a respectable magistrate, a friend of his residing in the county of Cambridge (not in that part of the county where, from the unfavourable state of the soil, the inhabitants might be supposed to feel more pressure, but in the fertile district of the county) and it contained a statement of distress which must shock every feeling mind. "You will not be much surprised," said his friend, "after what I mentioned on a former occasion, to hear the distresses of those who are engaged in agricultural pursuits in this neighbourhood. Only 8*d.* a day is given to strong, healthy, single men, who are capable of the greatest labour." [Hear, hear!]. He was aware such a melancholy view of the country would be new to some, and might perhaps startle them; but instances of similar poignant distress had occurred before he left the county which he had the honour to represent, one of which he would now state. That county had, in the days of Camden, been called the garden of England; but he implored the committee to mark the striking contrast. A farmer, who was the last occupier of land in a parish of that county, and on whom, of course, the payment of poor-rates had devolved, came to him, imploring in the most earnest manner to inform him what he should do, as he was unable to bear the burthens laid on him. Being asked what had become of the other occupiers of land in the parish, seeing he was left alone, "Sir," said the farmer, "worn out by the wretchedness of the times, they are not able to touch the land." The landholders to a man refused to plough the land, and this farmer was to leave his farm at Lady Day [Hear!]. Where then had the poor any right to apply when there were none in their own parish to pay the rates? Undoubtedly they must go to the neighbouring parishes. Nor was this a solitary instance of the miserable state of the country; he was ready to furnish gentlemen with many of a similar nature, should it be deemed necessary. The poor in many cases had abandoned their own residences. Whole parishes had been deserted, and the crowd of paupers increasing in numbers as they went from parish to parish, spread wider and wider this awful desolation. To evils of so alarming a nature, the committee were imperiously called to provide some remedy. The poor laws authorizing the paupers thus to go at large, would evidently bring the country to ruin, in a degree totally incapable of relief. He would not appeal to the feelings of the committee for remedying these evils, but he would call on them to do so as an act of justice—as a duty they were indispensably bound to fulfil. But the remedy could only be properly applied when there was a satisfactory knowledge of what was the cause of the disease. Without any great learning, or without much recourse to the various treatises on political economy, the cause might be defined to be, the inadequacy of the present price of grain, to the high rents of the land. And he wished it to be distinctly understood, that when he spoke of occupiers of land, he meant proprietors of land, and who at the same time held that land in their own hand. A calculation of the loss of capital had been made, amounting to 100,000,000*l.*, and though this sum might perhaps be exaggerated, no man could doubt the immense loss sustained in labour, &c. which the country could not but feel in a very great degree. It was a public national loss which had been sustained, but at present he would decline entering into the consideration of it in this view. The point particularly now to be discussed was, how is the country to be relieved? His hon. friend had proposed a series of very good resolutions, which he would consider as embracing two general points, first, the mode of relieving the country of the charges on land, and secondly, the mode of relieving it by raising the price of grain. Of the charges on land, he considered tythes to be of the first importance. To enter into any discussion of that interesting subject, would at present occupy too much time, and indeed would be a laborious task. He had, however, no hesitation in saying, it was productive of more moral and practical mischief than any other charge exacted on land, and he was certainly very desirous to see it abolished. In support of his opinion on this head, he would adduce one authority of very high importance, which he had no doubt his majesty's ministers would pay some attention to. The late Mr. Pitt, had proposed a plan to free the land from the vexatious process of tythes by commutation, which he meant to have classed with his plan for the redemption of the land tax, but the proposal was dropt for a more convenient season. If such a name had any weight with ministers, if they believed the distress was so very general as it really was, he hoped they would form some better plan than this, for paying the ecclesiastical pastors of the country. One argument which particularly recommended this to their attention was, that by the number of inclosures which had recently been made, the parishes where tythes were exacted, had diminished in number, and it had been invariably felt that the commutation of land was far more favourable to the interests of all concerned. Besides, provided no commutation of land could be effected, a commutation of corn rent might easily be made; and really it would invariably be found preferable in every view to the present system. Objections might probably be started to this mode, but he saw none so advantageous. At the same time, he would wish the committee to bear in mind, with all their attention to the distress of the country, that that distress was most keenly felt, not when capital was putting into the ground, but when it was taking out. Another charge to which he would advert, was the poor-rates, which he considered equally vexatious and oppressive, especially in a period like the present, when the taxes imposed by government were so numerous. It was very unjust that these rates should be exclusively levied from the proprietors of land only, without any reference to others who were better able to pay them. Levied as these rates were, he considered them the source of much immorality, and a refuge to indolence. He was of opinion, that the claims of paupers should be proportioned to the ages of the claimants. No one, for a moment, would doubt the propriety of providing for orphans, who had no friend or guardian but the hospitable care of a generous public. It was equally proper that relief should be afforded to those who in their days of industry had contributed to bear the public burthens, and who now, in the evening of life, or laden with infirmity and disease, were unable to provide for themselves. But he was not aware of the propriety of granting relief to those in the intermediate stage of life. He considered the interests of society would be better promoted by leaving them to the care of the benevolent and humane. Public morality would thus be promoted, and that connexion between rich and poor be established, which was the natural bond of society, and which was unhappily broken by this plan of poor-rates. The indigent, reduced to that situation by misfortune, had a legitimate claim to relief; and this method of granting relief would effectually prevent the indolent from preying so much as they do on the vitals of the public. On this subject he trusted ministers would consider, and they would see the advantage of his proposal, to confine the poor-rates no longer exclusively to landholders.—Another mode of relief might be effected, by reducing the duties on barley, which would be very advantageous to the proprietor, as he was the direct consumer of his own grain in this way to a certain extent. From a calculation which he had made, he found that the duty on malt, paid by a farmer occupying 400 acres, was actually more than he paid for property tax; and therefore, by reducing the duties, it would be found there would be a greater demand. He could not help noticing the deep obligations under which the country at present were to the right hon. the chancellor of the exchequer for his giving up the malt war duty. At the same time he would inform the right hon. gentleman, that grateful as the country were to him for his attention to their interests in this point of view, there was a general anxiety relative to the manner in which he would grant them this favour. The repeal of the tax, however pleasing it might be, had excited much uneasiness, because if continued till July, there would obviously be some suspension in business, unless the brewer saw he was likely to get the same relief to his liquor as he would have got to his malt. It would be better for the general interest of the public, if the right hon. gentleman could give up that tax immediately, as the uneasiness excited would thereby be removed, and business go on in its regular channel. If the right hon. gentleman would be so very kind as to consider the matter a little, he (Mr. Brand) had no doubt he would come to the same conclusion. Indeed, it was no more than fair for the brewer to have the same drawback on his beer as he would have on his malt, and to this he had no doubt the right hon. gentleman would pay every necessary attention.—He would proceed to show in what manner the land might be relieved by raising the price of grain; and with respect to store-houses for foreign corn he had much difficulty in supporting the proposition of the hon. gentleman, conceiving that they might as well be created on the other side of the channel as in this country. He agreed that it was very proper in years of abundance to collect grain for the purpose of supply in succeeding years of comparative scarcity; but there was not sufficient capital in the country to effect this. In other parts of the hon. gentleman's plan he most cordially concurred. The farmers, or in other words, the manufacturers of corn, had a claim to be protected, co-extensively with any other manufacturers. In this view the 12th resolution appeared to him to be most beneficial. He understood that that part of it which went by duties to prohibit the importation of foreign seeds was to be opposed by the right hon. gentlemen opposite. To him it appeared most desirable. In many parts of the country, in Lincolnshire, in Cambridgeshire, and in some other places, the cultivation of clover seed had been almost driven out by importation. A duty of 20*s*. a quarter would enable the farmer to enter into competition with the importer. In his opinion, if it were possible to impose a duty on the importation of foreign wool, without injury to our manufactures, it would be a measure most beneficial to agriculture. He knew that this would be difficult, but he thought it might be accomplished. A duty might be imposed on the cloth made with foreign wool, used in this country, and an equivalent drawback allowed on the export of cloth made from wool of home growth. He entreated that, whatever measures might be adopted, they should soon take place; for speculation would be at work, and much more actively than the committee in that House. The hon. gentleman concluded with expressing his thanks for the attention with which the committee had listened to him on this subject, on which, he confessed, he had been anxious to express his sentiments.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that he would not trouble the committee at present with the general opinions on the question before them, as he wished in the first place to collect the sentiments of as many hon. gentlemen as possible; but the hon. gentleman had put a question to him with respect to the malt war duty, to which an early answer on his part was certainly desirable. It related to the time and circumstance of taking off that duty. He was quite as aware as the hon. gentleman of the inconveniencies to which the hon. gentleman had alluded. They were in some degree unavoidable; but that did not make them less real. The effect of stagnating the process of a manufacture must be occasioned during the period when the manufacturer was preparing that article under a high duty, which was subsequently to enter into competition in the market with a similar article, prepared under a low duty. He could assure the hon. gentleman, that anxious as he was for the revenue, he was more anxious for the interests of agriculture and commerce. But he did not think any relief would be obtained by an anticipation of the cessation of the duty. This would be only to relieve one class of persons from an inconvenience by shifting it on another. The best course that could be adopted was, to provide that on the beer brewed from the time of the introduction of the bill until the cessation of the duty, and not disposed of by the brewer, a drawback should be allowed, proportioned to the quantity of malt used. This regulation would enable all the branches of the trade to go on with the least possible inconvenience.

Lord *Lascelles* said, he believed the distresses of the agricultural classes to be very great, and, with few exceptions, spread over the whole surface of the country. What were the causes, and what must be the remedy of that distress, he had never heard accurately defined. He thought the causes might be traced to the state of the circulation of the country. He had repeatedly turned his mind to the subject, and had been able to come to no other conclusion. Of the remedy proper to be applied, he thought nobody better able to form a correct judgment than the hon. gentleman who moved the resolutions. The propriety of remitting the property tax and the malt duties had been suggested; but the abandonment of these were no longer matters of speculation. All that could be done ought to be done for the relief of the agricultural interest; but, at the same time, they were to remember that there were two classes in the country, and it was the duty of parliament not to protect the agricultural interest to the ruin of the manufacturing interest. To the duty on the importation of foreign wool, he was bound, on behalf of those he represented, to object, and for himself, he thought such an impost could answer no good purpose. The noble lord said, that he considered it the worst possible policy to tax the raw material of a valuable manufacture, on which the industry of the country was successfully employed, and which greatly increased in its price, finally went back to the place from which it had been imported a manufactured article. The importance of the foreign wool brought into the kingdom, might be seen from the large and increasing demands for it. In 1812 the quantity of wool imported was

4,700,000lbs.; in 1813, it amounted to upwards of 7,000,000lbs., and last year we imported no less than 15,700,100lbs. It might be said, that we grow fine wool ourselves by an improved breed of sheep, but the House ought to be slow to adopt a measure like that which the hon. gentleman had thought it might be wise to adopt. The main points of the malt and property tax had been gained, and the others were of minor importance; for the House must not imagine that they could afford by interference any immediate or direct relief, where such extensive interests were concerned: the only actual relief that could be afforded was, to reduce the expenditure, and to set all classes at liberty from that burthen which now weighed so heavily on them. He did not say this as joining in the cry of the day, but from a conviction that no immediate relief could be afforded to the distresses of the country, and that the only alleviation for them would be a reduction of every unnecessary expenditure. He should be sorry if the House went into a committee with so erroneous an idea as that any great benefit could be conferred by active interference. He well knew what was said in the country, and what mistaken opinions people formed of the omnipotence of parliament. "Oh!" it was said, "the House is going into a committee, and all our difficulties will vanish." To encourage such ideas was only to plunge the people into deeper distress. If, without injury to other classes, any real relief could be afforded to one, he would be the first to embrace such a measure; but the only result of interference in matters of this nature was, to shift the burthen from one place, and lodge it with tenfold aggravation in another.

Colonel *Wood* observed, that though it might appear presumption in him to claim the attention of the committee to the declaration of his opinions on a subject so weighty as that now before it, and on which so many honourable members were so much better informed than himself, yet he could not refrain from trespassing upon its indulgence with a few observations. He did not think he should be discharging the duty he owed to his constituents, whose interest he was bound to consult and to represent, if he remained wholly silent. He would therefore take a short view of some of the subjects brought forward by the resolutions, and discussed in the speeches of the hon. mover and the other hon. member under the gallery (Mr. Brand). He was of opinion, that the recommendation of warehouseing our own grain in a year of surplus, so as to meet the emergencies of a year of scarcity, was at all times prudent, and, in the present circumstances of the agricultural interest, could not fail to be beneficial. It would create a demand when it was most wanted for sustaining prices, and would contribute to moderate prices when from scanty harvests they would have a tendency to rise too high. The objection that the hon. member opposite (Mr. Brand) made to the resolution which pledged the House to repeal so much of the act of last year as referred to the warehousing of foreign grain, did not appear to him to be well founded. He had said that the existence of a great supply in our granaries, imported from abroad, could produce no effect upon the home market so long as the other provisions of the corn laws remained; and that, in fact, these laws rendered it equally inefficient, with regard to prices, as if it had been warehoused in depots on the opposite shores. He could not allow the justness of this opinion. When so much grain was within our own reach, and in our own country, it must have an effect upon the prices, beyond what it would have if it remained in the country where it was produced, with only the probability of being imported at some future period. Whatever opinion might be entertained on this subject, one thing he thought would admit of no dispute, namely, that if warehousing our own grain was proceeded in, and if by this means a quantity of our surplus produce which depressed the market were taken out of it, and stored up for a year of insufficient supply, the country must be benefited. He entirely concurred with the resolution that recommended protecting duties for the produce of our own soil, and went along with the reasonings of the hon. members who supported it. One hon. gentleman had, on a former night, pointed out particularly the reasonableness and justice of protecting by high duties on importation the manufacture of butter in those districts the profits of which chiefly depended upon the encouragement given to the production of that article. As the hon. member supported the interests of his constituents, he (colonel W.) was bound to do the same for his; and as representing a Welsh county, he might claim protecting duties on the importation of cheese. Indeed, he was of opinion, that all the products of our agriculture, as well as those of our manufacturing industry, should receive adequate encouragement by the security of a preference in the home market.—He next adverted to the remission of the war duty on malt, and expressed his assurance that it would be considered as a great boon by the whole country, and would tend much to restore those good old practices which the people were obliged to renounce, by the high price which it fixed upon their most wholesome and favourite beverage. He was convinced that the measure gave general satisfaction, and was more extensively connected with the morals and happiness of the lower orders of society than might at first sight appear. He would not wish to counteract the beneficial results to which it might lead, by concurring in that part of the hon. mover's resolutions that recommended the diminution of the impost upon spirits. That duty ought rather, in his opinion, to be augmented, than either lessened or withdrawn. The high price of malt, creating a high price for ale, had deprived the common people of their most wholesome drink, and, to the injury of their health and morals, had driven them to the gin-shop. This was severely felt and deeply lamented in the principality of Wales, where all the people formerly were accustomed to brew their own liquor, but where now, from the duty on malt, he believed there was not one cottage that adhered to this practice. They resorted to the pernicious custom of dram-drinking, instead of the wholesome beverage of their own manufacture. By the withdrawing of the malt duty he hoped they would change their habits, and that brandy and other spirits would disappear before their good old practice of drinking ale.—The next subject on which he begged to make a remark or two, was one in which the principality to which he had the honour to belong was more deeply interested than the other parts of the empire: he meant the relief that would be given to the people by a diminution of the tax on salt. It pressed very heavily upon the Welsh; who were in the habit of salting all their meat before they used it. He did not believe that there was a bit of fresh meat eaten by a single cottager in the whole of the principality. The duty, he thought, ought to be taken off, or very much reduced. He recalled to the House what he had formerly said on the subject of the tax on agricultural horses. He had shown the hardship with which this duty pressed on the small farmer. He would not go over what he then stated, but he would suggest, as a relief to this class of men, who were so little able to bear heavy taxation, that they should have one horse duty free. The small farmer who, by what he could not but consider as an erroneous construction of the act, now paid for a riding horse, although he had only one for general purposes, which he might occasionally ride to the next market, would thus experience a great relief. The hon. gentleman under the gallery had delivered several opinions on the subject of the tithes, in which he entirely concurred. Nothing could more contribute to set the parish and the clergyman by the ears, than the present mode of levying tithes. In the war we had no leisure to attend to domestic arrangements; but, upon the return of peace, we might hope that we should find opportunities of reviewing our internal system of regulations, and of making such improvements as the interests of the nation demanded. The tithes and the poor-rates were among the subjects which the legislature was imperiously called upon to consider. He would now only say a word about the cause of our present agricultural distresses, and he attributed them chiefly to the effect that our diminished circulation had in compelling the country banker to refuse accommodation to the farmer. Our difficulties and distresses had increased from this cause to an alarming extent, and called for the immediate interposition of the legislature.

Mr. *Curwen* rose and addressed the committee as follows:—

Mr. Chairman; unwilling as I am to trespass on the patience of the committee, I must beg their indulgence, and I am the more solicitous to obtain it, as I cannot concur in the view my hon. friend has taken of the causes which have produced the present deplorable state of the country. Though I differ with him as to the origin, I most perfectly agree with him that nothing but prompt and effectual relief can save the country. No one entertains more respect for the hon. member for Essex, or appreciates his merits higher; and with a great part of what he has proposed I most perfectly concur. I shall not attempt to describe the state of the country; unfortunately there are but too many such cases as an hon. member has stated to be met with. The numerous petitions from all quarters bespeak the general state of suffering.—No doubts can be entertained on the subject. His majesty's ministers, whatever opinions they might have held, must now be perfectly impressed with the lamentable state to which the agriculture of the country is reduced. I doubt not the noble lord and the gentlemen opposite being as anxious and honestly disposed to adopt every practicable mode of relief as we are on this side the House: but one sentiment can on this occasion animate the House—we may differ as to the mode, but not as to the object. Could I concur with my hon. friend, that the present depreciated price of grain arose from a redundancy of produce, I should view our situation as more deplorable and alarming than I had yet considered; for was such the case, we might still be distant from the worst. To the thousands now out of employ, thousands more might experience the same misfortune. Melancholy would our case be—sufficiently afflictive is it under the most favourable point in which we can contemplate it.

It is indispensably necessary the committee should clearly and distinctly inform itself of the causes which have brought such ruin on our agriculture. In order correctly to judge of the present, we must refer to the past state of our agriculture. If it proceeds from a too extended cultivation, we shall discover a progressive advance towards it. The progress of agriculture is, from its nature, slow. As a proof of this, thirty years ago the country was supposed to require an annual import of one-twelfth of its consumption. The politicians of those times held agriculture in little estimation: they considered it advantageous to be purchasers of bread, as the means of extending the sale of our manufactures. A better and wiser policy, fortunately for the country, was adopted; for vain had proved the courage and spirit of the nation in opposing our host of enemies, had we remained dependent on them for the necessaries of life. Twenty years of unexampled exertion, in which the progress of knowledge in agriculture advanced beyond all former example, has been barely sufficient to supply what was deficient, and to provide for the increased population of probably not less than a million, which has accrued within that period. From the year 1783 to 1813 but one year occurs of export—I mean the year 1792—and that only to the trifling amount of 12,000 quarters. In the other thirty years thirty-four millions and a half of quarters were imported beyond what were exported; costing the country not less, probably, than 5*l.* a quarter, or the enormous sum of one hundred and seventy millions. What country but Great Britain would not have been ruined by such a drain? In the latter part of the year 1813 the depreciation of agricultural produce commenced; the crop of that year was generally good. In consequence of the discussions on the corn bill, Europe apprehended so profitable a trade would be stopped, and therefore all the surplus produce of the continent was poured in upon us. The import of that year, and up till April when the ports closed, amounted to one million eight hundred thousand quarters, of which the wheat alone was equal to the consumption of 100 days. Such a supply, thrown on a market adequate to its own demands, could not fail of producing most serious mischief. This undoubtedly gave the first blow. The crop of 1814 was unfortunately defective in quality as much as quantity. We could in no way come in competition with foreign grain, and this compelled the farmer to reduce the price to a much lower degree than would have been necessary had the crop been favourable. Up to the year 1813 there is nothing indicative of the country possessing a surplus. The crop of 1814 was greatly deficient; that of 1815 most abundant; it yet, however, remains to be seen whether it has not been so exhausted by the waste of cheapness as not to cause a considerable rise before the next harvest. If high prices have not the effect of producing a surplus of grain, is it likely that it should have occurred during a period of depression? Reduced prices must have had the effect of reducing the quantity of wheat grown in the last two years. A great proportion of our best soils are devoted to pasture; this compels the cropping those of inferior quality; and hence the great disproportion of produce. The soils on which wheat is grown may be thus classed:—the first quality producing from 40 to 45 Winchester bushels per acre; the second from 30 to 35; inferior from 16 to 25. To raise grain sufficient for our consumption a considerable extent of lands of the inferior quality must be cropped with wheat. Price only can enable this to be done;

rich countries alone can afford to cultivate poor land. Now, Sir, I can see no reason to suppose the country to be suffering from an excess of produce, under reduced prices, when no such thing occurred when they were higher, and when consequently there was more encouragement for the raising wheat. Nor has the fall of grain been the only difficulty the farmers had to contend with; an equal depreciation has taken place in all stock, and every other produce, wool excepted. If, therefore, a redundancy of produce was the sole cause, we must admit that this extended to stock as well as grain. This, I do not suppose, will be contended for by any one.

The next point in which I differ from the member for Essex is, as to the amount of rents made by the farmers. He estimates them at five parts, and probably very correctly from the point in which he takes his view; but I must remind him, that persons possessing large capitals, and renting from 500*l.* to 2000*l.* per annum, exist in only a small part of the country. One of the proudest and most gratifying sights I ever saw, was the corn-market at Norwich, where 400 farmers were supposed to be assembled, possessing capitals of from 5,000 to 30,000*l.* The like may, in some degree, exist in many of the southern counties, and even in Durham, Northumberland, and some parts of Scotland; but such is not the case in the kingdom at large. The great bulk of property is let in farms under 150*l.* per annum. A large proportion of tenants have raised themselves by their industry on small capitals; on such farms three rents, or three and a half, is the utmost extent. That the profits and produce of a farm depend greatly on the capital, is not to be disputed. In Norfolk, and where a system of good husbandry prevails, there is one acre at least in six under winter green crops. A farmer who can thus consume his straw with turnips, makes eight ton of manure for each ton of straw. Where turnips are not grown, the ton of straw produces only three ton and a quarter of manure, and that of very inferior quality. This at once shows the operation of capital. I am more anxious in urging this on the attention of the House, as it accounts for the generality of farmers being so little able to bear up against the pressure of the times. A most erroneous opinion is entertained by the public as to the profits of farmers. A general spirit of improvement led them to expend much of their gains. The price of labour was greatly advanced during the war, which, together with taxes and poor-rates, took from the farmer a very large share of his profits, and much more than those who looked only superficially at the question had any idea of. Thus, then, for the last two years the farmer of small capital has not been making more than two rents and a half. Were the price of produce to remain as it has been, taxes and poor-rates would swallow up the whole landed produce of the country.

Having, Mr. Chairman, endeavoured to show that the fall does not proceed from a redundancy of produce, and that it has exhausted the means of a large proportion of the tenantry of the kingdom, I would call the attention of the House to the state of the agricultural labourer. His sufferings exceed those of any former period. In the time of scarcity he saw and felt the cause,—it was the dispensation of Providence. The affluent alleviated the sufferings of the lower orders by every possible exertion in their behalf. The scope of the affliction, being but of short duration, enabled them to support their sufferings with fortitude—no man was idle. Now, Sir, in the midst of abundance, thousands are out of employment; labour, at any rate of wages, is not to be had: those whose good fortune it is to be employed, are working for lower wages, so that no advantage results to them from cheapness. The superfluity of labour threatens a still further reduction of wages; so that the future holds out no cheering prospect to this meritorious class of society—unassisted, the evil must spread. Both farmer and proprietor will be compelled still further to contract the scale of their operations.

I would next advert to the manufacturer. For some time after the peace, the demand for goods of all kinds was greater than at any former period. This afforded full employment, without any reduction of wages. The advantage of the cheapness of the necessaries of life appeared highly for the interest of this class of the community. They, and the noble lord, reckoned on a state of things that could only be temporary. As soon as the foreign market fell to the level of its ordinary supply, the decreased demand in the home market was felt. The magnitude of the sum which may be supposed lost to the manufacturer is enormous. Of two millions six hundred thousand persons employed in agriculture, one may fairly suppose a reduction in the rate of wages equal to 3*l.* a head,—nearly eight millions. This, heretofore, was perhaps wholly expended in goods of various kinds. Add to it the retrenchments on the part of the farmer, and you may suppose it twelve millions; and not less than half that sum retrenched on the part of the proprietor. Thus has the manufacturing interest lost customers to an amount little if any thing short of twenty millions per annum. Those unfortunate prejudices entertained between the mercantile and agricultural interests have produced much mischief to the country. Happily, all parties are enlightened by this fatal misfortune, and each has risen in the estimation of the other. If any jealousy still is entertained by the less enlightened classes, this is fast wearing away;—one great truth in political economy is established—that trade and agriculture are so united in their interests that the ruin of one must involve the destruction of the other. That our manufacturers are now suffering is too certain. Their wages are reduced, and their hours of working limited, so as to render abortive all advantages of cheap provisions. An advance on the necessaries of life, that would restore to them full employment, would conduce materially to these advantages. In relieving the agriculturalist you are equally relieving them. The best and most important consideration is, for the House to weigh the consequence that must infallibly arise out of the distressed state of agriculture. The large tracts likely to be untenanted as well as the defective management which there is too much cause to apprehend may be general, must contribute most materially to reduce the next year's crop. Admitting it to fall short of what is requisite for our consumption, what must be the consequence? A rise in grain, as destructive to a large portion of the population as low prices have been. Such a case is certainly to be apprehended if means are not resorted to for preventing it. The corn bill, though its operation has not yet been felt here, must already have had a powerful effect on those countries which heretofore supplied us. Now, in fact, Great Britain was the only purchaser; this failing, the growth of grain, beyond their own wants, will be discontinued. Should a scarcity from any cause arise, how is it to be supplied? The price would on such occasions be enormous. It behoves us therefore not to disregard our present situation, but to look anxiously forward to the consequences which may, by possibility, result from the distresses of the times.

The measures proposed by my hon. friend, for the relief of agriculture, are wise, but they are too distant in their effects to meet the present crisis. The taking off the war malt duty will greatly relieve the barley-growers: this, however, is confined to a small district. I mean not to undervalue it, as it will benefit the farmer and contribute to the comfort of the people, and I hope the reduction of price, which I should rejoice to have announced to the public, will contribute to introduce malt liquor into more general use. The public will, I hope, Sir, soon have the benefit of the two millions and a half relinquished by government. On the subject of giving a bounty on export, I do not see where a market can be found. In years of scarcity in other countries any surplus would find a ready sale. As a general measure, the only regular purchasers are Spain and Portugal: their consumption is too trifling, and interfered with by America and the states of Barbary. There is one source, however, to which a bounty may be applicable, I mean the supply of our West India colonies. This would at once give additional freight to our shipping, and procure a saving in the returned produce equal to the bounty. I fear, Sir, our shipping feel at this moment the general depression, as much as any part of our concerns. I apprehend the consumption of the West India colonies and our foreign garrisons may amount to a million of quarters,—an object worthy of serious attention. I most fully concur with the member for Essex in the propriety of storing grain as a provision against defective harvests. London consumes one-eighth of the produce of the kingdom—above a million quarters of wheat annually. Not less than three months supply ought ever to be on store,—or two hundred and fifty thousand quarters. Admitting the loss and charges of such an establishment to amount to one hundred thousand a-year, it would be no great sacrifice for the security it would afford.

So much, sir, has been said on the policy of some modification with regard to the law of tithes, that I am unwilling to occupy the time of the committee. The present system must be acknowledged to be a great pressure on the country, and calls immediately for legislative interference. I am not aware that any arrangement could be objected to by the clergy, as it would not only be the means of upholding and establishing their interests, but of essentially relieving and improving the country. I most fully concur with the noble lord, the member for Yorkshire, that it admits of great doubt how far it would be wise to check the importation of fine wool. Our climate, generally speaking, is not adapted for the growth of fine wool. I believe it to be attended with great loss as to the produce of food. Our combing wool as well as our coarse wool has sold well, and this may be attributed to their working on the fine wool. Anxious as I am for the interests of agriculture, I could never be induced to promote them at the expense of our manufactories. If the gain by the manufacturer outweighs the loss of the farmer, the public gains by the trade, and it ought not to be meddled with. Without full information on this subject, the House would not think it right to take any steps.

The next important point is the charges for maintaining the poor. When I first had the honor of a seat in this House, the sum raised for their support did not exceed three millions; it now amounts to above seven. So complex and multifarious is the system, that I fear no individual will be found courageous enough to attempt bringing forth a plan for correction of its abuses. The system is radically wrong, and instead of advancing the comforts and happiness of the lower orders, it contributes to destroy all forethought, and plunge the great mass of the people into vice and misery. Humanity as well as policy demands that the wisdom of the legislature should be exerted on the subject. By referring the matter to a committee, to examine and report on the state of the poor, some plan may be suggested equal to the magnitude of the evil.

There is a further subject connected with agriculture to which I beg to call the attention of the chancellor of the exchequer. Mr. Pitt pledged himself to the abolition of the salt tax, and lord Sidmouth renewed the pledge; unfortunately the matter still remains as it did, greatly to the injury of agriculture. The tax produces a million and a half, one-third of which I believe is expended in its collection. The country would be a gainer if it paid two millions in any other mode to have the free use of salt. It would become a source of extensive trade; both for feeding stock, as well as a manure, it would most materially serve the interests of agriculture. Foreigners can afford to import this article from us, and find infinite advantage by so doing; whilst our own country is precluded the use of it from an oppressive and injudicious tax. The recent additions made by the right hon. the chancellor of the exchequer on spirits have alone reduced the quantity manufactured in Scotland from three millions of gallons to one million; and thus, from the enormous scale on which smuggling is carried on, a reduction of duties on spirits would materially benefit both the farmer and public. I should be sorry to suggest any reduction of the taxes which, under the most complete and rigid system of economy, and one totally different from what the noble lord at first proposed to the House, will be barely sufficient to supply the exigencies of the state. In cases where the country gains nothing, and the subject suffers much, it is consistent with political wisdom to grant relief.

Again I strongly call on the right hon. gentleman to consider the hardships to which the farmer of 70*l.* per annum is exposed, from the vexations of the saddle-horse duty: the income tax on his property was but 70*s.* a year, whilst he is subject to be charged for a saddle horse 2*l.* 17*s.* and 10*s.* for a groom. Inspectors have imposed the duty on all who kept a horse, and left to the individual the *onus* of proving that neither himself nor family had ever used the horse on any occasion but for agricultural purposes. The temptation to perjury is dreadful. The party is to account at the distance of nearly two years for all that has passed. In 97 appeals in one ward, in the county of Cumberland, 94 were allowed. I do intreat the right hon. gentleman to take this into his serious consideration, and so to modify the tax, or to grant relief to farmers of small properties, and to fix some moderate payment, to avoid the vexation and enormity they give birth to.

I have now, Sir, shown the general pressure on all ranks arising out of the agricultural distress, and that it has not originated from any superfluity of our own growth—partly from a ruinous foreign import, but mostly from another cause to which I shall now advert. No sooner had the depreciation of produce commenced in the latter end of the year 1813, than the country banker, who had previously been ready to grant accommodation to the farmer, began to narrow his dealings; as the pressure increased, his support was still further narrowed, till at length not a shilling could be obtained. Every security was called in. I do not conceive a less sum than 25 millions has been withdrawn from circulation in the shape of country bank paper; 12 millions of this constituted agricultural capital, and contributed to enable the farmer to carry on his operations. The effect of this change has been to force, with few exceptions, the farmers of many quarters of the kingdom to carry their produce to market; the object of all was to sell. The price, too, was of secondary consideration;—money must be had—every day made circumstances worse, and so it has proceeded till the crop has been gradually exhausted. The sale of produce of the last six months greatly exceeds the usual average. The labourer and manufacturer will only eat the finest flour. I am not disposed to find fault that those who have few luxuries within their power, should indulge their taste in what is within their reach; the coarsest parts of the flour, equal to one-eighth, have, to a great amount, been unsaleable, and applied to the feeding of pigs and cattle. I have long been strongly inclined to believe, that a rise in the price of grain would take place before the next harvest. In wheat the price is already advanced to 72*s.* in many parts of England. This, however, comes too late to relieve the great mass of farmers. The produce is greatly exhausted, and if his midsummer rents are to be paid, which will be partially, you will leave him without any thing to carry on his operations. Whether I consider the farmer or proprietor, I see equally the necessity of granting him some temporary pecuniary relief; his wants are immediate; and by this alone you can stop the general ruin which threatens the country—the present as well as the future interests of the country demand this of you. Twelve millions, brought into immediate circulation, would have a most powerful influence in raising the spirits of the farmer, restoring the activity of the agricultural interest, giving occupation to the labourer, and employment to the manufacturer. What is proposed by my hon. friend may promote the general interests of agriculture, but its immediate rescue from destruction, and almost certain state of bankruptcy, can only be effected by instantaneous relief. Through the medium of the commissioners of the income tax this might be done with little trouble and no risk of loss. It would be something consolatory to the country to render what has been such a source of oppression a means of relief. It is fortunate that there is no further occasion for the labours of those gentlemen; that their last act can be made what would prove generally beneficial. I should recommend the lending equal to half a year's rent to all farmers, where the landlord would give his collateral security, payable in six, twelve, and eighteen months. Much benefit was produced by a similar plan to the commercial interests a few years back. I had the honour to act as one of the commissioners. I verily believe it would be the salvation of our agriculture at this moment; and the plan would have this to recommend it beyond that of my hon. friend's,—it would not innovate on the existing laws between landlord and tenant.

If the tenant could of his own accord pledge his stock, it might be to the prejudice of the landlord; such a plan of relief would be inadequate to the extent of the evil, and afford only a temporary benefit. The plan I suggest to the committee would embrace the distresses of every part of the country. The interest of the loan to be paid, three per cent. by the landlord and two by the tenant. I cannot doubt the noble lord and his colleagues being sincere in their wish to remove the difficulties which the war and its numerous burthens have brought on the country. I wish the endeavours of the House may prove successful. The crisis is awful, the country looks with anxious solicitude to the discussion of parliament, and never had they more reason to confide in the wisdom and patriotism of any House of Commons; already it has rendered to the country more solid and essential services than any preceding parliament for the last thirty years. The victory over the income tax has brought with it reforms that would never have been heard of; and I trust, by persevering in the same line of conduct, they will save the country, and restore its prosperity, and relieve the people from their most oppressive burthens.

Mr. *Leslie Foster* lamented that, under the various forms in which this question had presented itself during the last two years, it had been so much the custom to regard the interests of the grower and the consumer as opposed to each other, and every measure submitted to parliament as in the light of a diplomatic arrangement. He agreed with the hon. gentleman that bitter experience had undeceived the people of this country of this error, and that there was now a general conviction of the close connexion that subsisted between the prosperity of every class and interest in the community. It was now admitted by most thinking men that we had arrived at a dilemma, in which we must either submit to a subtraction of British capital, or continue to contend against the low prices of foreign markets. He begged the committee to pay attention to the documents on the table, by which it was clearly established that this country, in the seasons of its largest import and its severest domestic scarcity, had never obtained from abroad above one-fifteenth of its whole annual consumption of grain. In this calculation he included all kinds of grain, the gross aggregate of which was between 35 and 41 millions of quarters per annum, and the average of which he might therefore take at 37 millions. The greatest importation of foreign grain took place in the year 1801, amounting to 2,406,000 quarters, or about one-fifteenth of the consumption of that year. The next year of great import was 1810, when the foreign grain brought into the British market was 2,236,000 quarters, or about one-sixteenth of the consumption. For the year 1813 there were similar returns. It certainly must be desirable that some settled system of policy should be pursued, in order to prevent those sudden fluctuations which operated to the alternate distress or ruin both of the farmer and the consumer. Any man who referred to the accounts before the committee must perceive how weak a reliance could be placed, in seasons of exigency, upon a foreign supply. Let him advert also to the peculiar situation of the farmer, and, on the question of encouragement, recollect that he did not possess the advantage of the stockholder, who might retire from and return to the market at his pleasure; but that the farmer's capital consisted of his barns and granaries, and was not to be converted into ready money as might suit his interest or convenience. It was a fallacy to suppose that all this would speedily right itself by the natural operation of a free trade. The principle was indisputable, as far as it limited itself to the internal commerce of the country, but it would not apply to a state of things in which the produce of our own capital and industry, burthened with heavy taxes, was to be mixed up in the general market with the produce of countries labouring under little or no taxation at all. It became something like a question of faith. Would the nation choose to depend, in extraordinary seasons, upon a foreign supply, or would they take measures for ensuring, as far as possible, a supply at home, and look to the foreign grower only for occasional relief? Upon this single question of the trade in grain was he an advocate for monopoly, and the only article which he would except from the general principle of unrestricted commerce was the agricultural produce of our own soil. The late war had called into exertion all the physical and moral energies of this country, but it had pressed upon its agriculture with peculiar severity. This pressure had been greatly aggravated by the extensive imports of the last year. The effect of that importation had been, not so much to incapacitate the farmer from maintaining the competition, as to disable the country banker from furnishing that circulating medium, by means of which alone the farmer could find a vent for his produce. Under all the circumstances, however, he could not agree in taking that gloomy view of the state of the country which had been drawn by some honourable gentlemen. He saw it rich in population, in produce, in houses, in a cultivated soil, and in all the sources and materials of internal strength and opulence. To him nothing appeared wanting to a course of progressive prosperity, but a system of excluding generally the foreign corn-grower, and of depending upon our own domestic industry and resources. The farmer's incapacity, he was persuaded, was but temporary; it was relative, and not intrinsic; it required only that he should find that customer in the home manufacturer which the home manufacturer found in him. It was impossible for him, however, to go so far as to approve either of the plan of abolishing the warehousing system, or of issuing exchequer bills; and he had no doubt that the relief already obtained by the discontinuance of the property tax and the duties on malt would very materially benefit the agricultural interests of the country.

Sir *John Newport* observed, that he would not detain the committee by any lengthened arguments, the more particularly as from what had passed, very little remained to be said on the present subject. A great evil was acknowledged to exist, in the general distress of the agricultural classes, which in his opinion could only be remedied by giving them sufficient protection against the foreign grower. After the long and arduous war which had just terminated, it would be useless to look for a remedy to many of the distresses consequent upon it, unless sufficient protection were given to the landed interest. How were they to secure the British grower against foreign competition? By laying such a duty on the importation of foreign produce as would countervail the taxation to which the British agriculturist was subjected, and to which foreigners were not liable. The whole system of this country was built upon monopoly; and we were not at liberty to depart from that monopoly with respect to the farmer alone. If protection was afforded to the grower, by securing him against foreign competition, he thought there was sufficient capital in the country for the relief of agriculture. Much relief might also be afforded by the appointment of a committee to revise the laws relating to the trade in wool, although he entirely concurred with a noble lord under the gallery, that every measure of this nature ought to be the result of a well-advised deliberation.

Lord *Elmley* said, he was sorry to call the attention of the House from the subject more immediately before the committee, but he understood, that in his absence some observations had been made by certain hon. members, touching his conduct in presenting a petition to the House, in which these hon. members threw out some imputations as to his having neglected his duty to his constituents. He thought some explanation was due by the hon. members to whom he alluded.

Mr. *Methuen* explained, that in presenting to the House a petition from his constituents in Wiltshire, he had taken occasion to observe, that a petition on the same subject had been presented by the noble lord, when the House was very thinly attended, when none of his majesty's ministers were present, and when all discussion upon it was therefore in a manner precluded.

Mr. *Lyttelton* explained to the same effect. He did not mean to impute to the noble lord any intention of suppressing the petition, but he felt it incumbent on him to bring it under the notice of the House.

Lord *Elmley* observed, that he had acted upon the rule he always adhered to, of presenting every petition put into his hands at the earliest possible opportunity.

Mr. *Peel* said, that however great the distress might be in England, it was much greater in Ireland. In that country all the separate circumstances which contributed to this distress, operated in a stronger degree than in England. If much evil had been produced in England by the state of the currency, and the failure of the country banks, he appealed to those members who knew the situation of Ireland, whether in that respect it was not still worse. He begged the House to consider that the relief which had been afforded in England by the remission of taxation would not have such an effect in Ireland. Taxes had been remitted to the extent of seventeen millions, being the amount of the property tax and of the malt tax. In England, therefore, there was relief from taxes to the amount of one-fourth part of the whole; whereas in Ireland this relief was only felt to the amount of one-eighteenth part of the whole. The only adequate protection to Ireland would be by giving the preference to her agricultural produce; to this preference she could alone look for relief. But it did not seem to be the scope of the resolution now moved to give this relief, even by preference in the great article of corn. There was another article in which he was glad to hear that relief was to be afforded,—he meant the encouragement of the butter trade. Considering the state of society in that country, relief could only be afforded by giving a stimulus to industry; and this could not be afforded in a more effectual way than by encouraging the produce of this apparently unimportant article of butter. Those who were unacquainted with the situation of Ireland, would perhaps hear with surprise, that there was no one article of such official value as butter, excepting the great staple commodities of corn and linen. To enable the committee to form an accurate judgment as to the importance of this article, he gave the following short statement:—In 1815, the aggregate amount of the total exports of bullocks, cows, beef, and bacon, from Ireland, was 897,245*l.*; in the same year the amount of butter exported was 918,000*l.* The total amount of the exports from Ireland in that year, including articles of every description, was about 7,000,000*l.*, so that the article of butter constituted nearly 1-7th part of the whole amount of the exports of Ireland. The following statement would show to what an extent the produce of this article in Ireland had of late been diminished in consequence of the importation of foreign butter. In 1813 the amount of foreign butter imported into London was 29,111*l*. In the same year the amount imported into London was 159,872*l*. So that the quantity of foreign butter imported three years ago, was about one-sixth part of the quantity imported from Ireland. But in the year 1815 the quantity of foreign butter imported into London was 134,000 hundred weight; whereas in that year the quantity imported into London from Ireland was only 115,123 hundred weight. This statement would show how much encouragement was wanted for this article; and it would also show, that relief was not afforded by the remission of taxes; but must be given by protecting the produce of the country against that of foreign nations. If the committee was convinced of this, his odject would be effected.

Mr. *Robinson* was desirous of stating, in the outset of his observations, that he considered the resolutions proposed by the hon. gentleman to be open to various objections. In the first place, they appeared to him to be far less necessary now, than at the period when they were originally introduced. Since that period a great practical relief had been extended by the cessation of the burthens under which the agricultural interest had previously laboured. He was one who certainly had thought the financial system recommended by his right hon. friend to be the most advisable which parliament at present could adopt: but the property tax and the war malt duties having in fact expired, or being about to expire, it was in vain to deny that agriculture was already relieved in two of its most solid branches. He believed that he rightly took the general sense of the House, when he assumed it to be unfavourable both to the plan of abandoning the warehousing system, and to that of affording temporary assistance by an issue of exchequer bills. It was impossible that either British or foreign corn should ever be warehoused upon mere vague speculation, because the uncertainties of a season might make all such speculations fatal. With regard, then, to the proposition for granting a bounty on exportation, it was not a doubt which he entertained of its expediency, but an intimate conviction that he felt of its impolicy, on which his opposition to it would be founded. His conviction was, that no trade which could stand by itself needed the assistance of a bounty, and that no bounty could uphold a trade which required artificial support. He was equally averse to the plan of turning the protecting into prohibitory duties; and he was so, not upon a view of particular articles of natural produce, but on a view of them in the gross. In the situation which he had the honour to hold, he could assure the House that he had received innumerable applications, calling upon him to impose a prohibitory duty in favour of almost all the various articles of domestic produce. Many of these statements were quite convincing when considered separately, but it was his duty to compare them, and act on a consideration of the whole. To adopt the principle of an universal prohibition, appeared to him to be little less than to adopt that continental system of exclusion which it was one of the first objects of the war to overturn. He did not mean to say that no crisis could occur in which that system might not be applicable. Such a case, in his opinion, had presented itself last year, when he had felt it his duty to introduce a new legislative measure on the subject of the corn trade. He considered that measure to have stood on the ground of an overwhelming necessity, to have been demanded by an extraordinary combination of circumstances, and to have properly superseded the natural freedom of foreign commerce, at a time when that commerce depended, not only on the casualties of the seasons, but on the caprice or policy of foreign enemies. But, while he objected to the principle of prohibition, he was ready to admit that he could easily conceive a most material difference between that and a principle of protection; though, at the same time, what extent of duty should be fixed upon as the protective one was a matter of very considerable doubt, and of serious consideration. It was from a conviction of the political difficulties in which Ireland was placed, as well as of the agricultural distresses under which she laboured, that he had it in contemplation to propose a duty on foreign butter that would operate as a protection to that of Ireland: but still he admitted, that this was only a choice of what appeared the least of two evils, and not a good thing *per se*. There were grounds in the particular situation of Ireland from which he concluded, that the measure he meant to propose would be doing a great practical good to that country: but, in his opinion, there did not exist grounds for going the same length on other articles, for which the hon. member had proposed protecting duties. If it were the general opinion of the House that there should be a protecting tax on foreign tallow, cheese, and hides, in favour of our own produce, he should consider himself bound to submit to that opinion, which he should not deem altogether unreasonable, if the question with regard to the tallow and the hides stood alone and unconnected. The great objection was, however, that there was already a duty on these foreign articles; and, what was more important still, they were the two articles with which one of the greatest branches of our trade was carried on—namely, that with South America. It was quite impracticable to obtain specie alone for our commodities, and indeed barter itself was one of the most advantageous modes of conducting commerce. It would therefore be extremely imprudent, on general principles, to cut up by the roots a branch of trade of growing and almost incalculable importance. With regard to hides, there was also this additional objection, that any new tax on them would only increase the evil already so severely felt from the high duties on leather; and this burthen would press with the severest weight on the very agriculturists who were proposed to be relieved by the high protecting duty. Similar considerations appeared to him equally applicable to the proposed duties on wool and rapeseed imported. Any increased duty on them appeared objectionable, as injurious to the woollen manufactures of the country. With regard to rapeseed, the oil extracted from which was partially employed in the woollen manufacture, any new duty on it seemed objectionable on the same grounds. Two classes of society thought it important to their interests to impose a duty on foreign rapeseed—these were the whale-fishers and the agriculturists. The former class had stated to him that they were nearly driven out of the market by the conversion of foreign rapeseed into oil, that was employed in various processes in which whale-oil would otherwise be used. But what would it avail to the agriculturist, if the foreign rapeseed were driven out of the market, and they were met by the competition of the whale-fishers? And, on the other hand, if the whale-fishers were cut up by the produce of British rapeseed, they would have a similar ground of complaint. The whale-fishers, in their conversations with him, had admitted the difficulty; though, at the same time, they had candidly declared, that they had no objection to compete with the British grower, but only with the foreigner. How, then, would the agriculturists be relieved by a duty on rapeseed, if it should happen, as the whale-fishers expected, that they would be able to beat the former out of the market? He was afraid that we had already gone quite as far as policy would admit in our system of prohibitions, if not indeed too far; and we should be particularly cautious how we advanced still farther into the system. With all his inclination to promote the interests of agriculture, yet in his official situation, this opposite view to that of the hon. mover of the resolutions was strongly pressed upon him by a variety of considerations. There was one particular exception in the case of butter, and he had stated the reasons, arising from the situation of Ireland, which had induced him to make it. He had felt it his duty to state his objections to the measures proposed, and he did so with all deference for the opinion of the committee.

Mr. *Barham* remarked, that the strength, the virtue, and the happiness of the people, mainly depended on the prosperity of the agriculture of the country; and on this principle he contended, that the country should be forced to feed its own population. No partial advantage to be derived from commerce could compensate for any deficiency in this respect. The true principle of national prosperity was, an absolute prohibition of the importation of foreign agricultural produce, except in extreme cases. He objected to the resolution proposing a bounty on the export of grain, because no bounty we could afford to give would counterbalance the advantages of foreign countries in respect to cheapness.

Mr. *Frankland Lewis* observed, that he had heard with great pleasure the speech of his right hon. friend at the head of the board of trade. It was to him a source of great satisfaction, that this department of the public service was guided by such enlightened views and liberal principles. Happy would it have been in former instances, if some of the many applications constantly made to that office for protecting duties had not been too readily listened to. Still, seeing that his right hon. friend concluded his speech with such a negative catalogue of remedies, he was inclined to fear that nothing would be effected that was likely to afford relief to the agriculture of the country now or hereafter; though he did not mention this as any accusation against his right hon. friend, but as a sad proof of the difficulty of finding any. He would entreat the House, however, not to let the agriculture, the main interest of the state, fall into decay, without deliberately considering every measure that might avert such a calamity. It was not this or that branch of manufactures, it was not Spitalfields or Coventry, whose existence was at stake; it was that of England herself, to which all other interests were mere appendages. The question was, whether the land-owners of England should be reduced to the lowest rank in the scale of society? If they were pressed down to the earth, then would perish the safeguards of the constitution—the frame of the whole of English society; and, though the language might remain, England would never be again that for which she had been admired. He had anxiously listened to all that had been said in the committee; and he must say, that if ever there was a remarkable coincidence of opinion on all sides of the House, it was manifested on the present occasion. Here the hon. gentleman briefly enumerated the causes to which the agricultural distresses might be ascribed, concluding with the more recent one of the withdrawing of the country-bank circulation. He had listened anxiously to his right hon. friend, expecting to hear some observations from him on the money-circulation of the country. When attention was directed to this topic, it would naturally occur, that from the distress prevailing among the farmers, there was likely to be a diminished supply, and consequent high prices. This was not a consolatory prospect to the people, though undoubtedly a remedy would in this way be afforded to the agricultural interest. But then, from the altered value of our currency, there were no means of obtaining relief. He calculated that the price of wheat had fallen within these five years from 100 shillings per quarter to 55 shillings. Of this fall in price he ascribed 20 per cent. to the altered value of our currency, which had now risen nearly to its old standard, and the other 30 per cent. to the fall in the real value of the commodity, occasioned by peace and other circumstances. Was this, he would ask, to be the permanent state of things, or was it to be removed? This was by far the most important part of the present discussion. The fall in the real value of grain was a matter beyond the regulation of the House; but the fall of price, to the amount of 20 per cent. occasioned by the rise in the value of our currency, was the point to which the attention of the legislature ought to be mainly directed, as being within its control. He would conjure ministers and the House not to leave the country at sea, the sport of this most dangerous system. The depreciation of currency was not attended with the same hazardous consequences under the despotic government of the continent as with us. What those governments once did in adulterating and depreciating the currency of their respective states could not again be undone, and hence all contracts accommodated themselves to the change. In this way the value of the ruble in Russia had been depreciated from half-a-crown to 10*d*.; but here we had got to this situation, that our notes could be diminished in value to almost any extent, and then increased in value in the same proportion. Hence our system was one of infinitely greater hazard than any other course that ever was pursued. If our standard of currency was to be maintained at every sacrifice, why did not government, taking advantage of the present price of specie, compel the bank to resume payment in coin? Then, at least, we should have the certainty, that the fall of 20 per cent. on agricultural produce could never be recovered. If, however, cash payments were not resumed, then he believed that a great part of that paper which had been withdrawn from circulation would be gradually re-issued, increasing the prices of every commodity, and proceeding exactly in the same course as that which the country had already witnessed. Something must be done to secure us from the dangers of the system. Better would it be to sit down with the loss of 20 per cent, than gradually to increase the circulation of the country to an indefinite extent, and thus expose the country to the dangers that might arise from a sudden panic. The system to which he now alluded had in its effects been the chief cause of our agricultural distresses. How greatly had it tended to degrade the land-owner in the scale of society! For, having borrowed hundreds of millions in a depreciated currency, we had now to pay the interest of these millions with a currency at par. How much of the real property of the country must in this way be permanently absorbed by the stockholder! He suspected, indeed, it would be found utterly impossible to pay the mass of interest in the standard currency. He should be happy to find a remedy for the existing depression of the real price of agricultural produce. If things were left to themselves, indeed, this evil would cure itself, and all other things would be regulated by the price of the necessaries of life; but it unfortunately so happened, that there could be little or no alteration in the amount of the taxes. The portion of the taxes destined for the payment of the national debt could not be diminished, though the ordinary expenses of government might be diminished by the exertions of that House. Some hon. gentlemen had expressed their surprise at the difficulties experienced, seeing that there never was a period when there was more abundance of produce in the country; but the value of that produce depended not so much on its personal use to the proprietor, as on the means which he had of exchanging it for an adequate return. These proprietors were so situated, that they must pay the money they had borrowed, the annuities they had contracted, and they must receive an equivalent in exchange, to enable them to do this. The consequence, he suspected, would be, that the existing plenty would speedily be ended by the want of remuneration. The first and most obvious mode of affording relief to the agriculturists was that of reducing taxation. No one circumstance in this session had afforded him greater satisfaction than the taking off of the war malt duty. This, of all others, would be the greatest relief to the landed interest. He did not, however, quite understand the mode in which the chancellor of the exchequer proposed to give the relief up to July next. If he proposed merely to allow a drawback of the tax on malt in the hands of brewers, it should be considered, that in the country there were many families who brewed their own malt liquor, and they would for a time be deprived of the proposed advantage. With respect to the duty on spirits, a strong case might be made out which would at least show that this subject should be again revised; and though, with respect to the many other duties which bore on land, he was not sanguine enough to hope that they could all be removed, yet he trusted that the committee would lend its endeavours to lighten as much as possible those burthens which it could not entirely take away. He most cordially concurred in the proposition, that prohibitory duties of all kinds should if possible be avoided; but, at the same time, he could not but allow that those who differed with him in opinion had something like a fair ground to go upon. They might truly say, that a system of prohibitions had long existed in this country among the trading and manufacturing classes; that the landholders had hitherto followed very slowly, and at great distance, the path so generally pursued by the other interests of the community; that they had not from time to time attacked the trading board with petitions, to protect their individual interest to the exclusion of others; that, on the contrary, they had in general been the sacrifices to others gain; and that every prohibition had, in fact, been a tax levied on them to the benefit of the manufacturer. They might justly complain, that a principle which had been generally acted upon, while it operated to their detriment, should now on a sudden be exclaimed against as a wrong one, when it was possible that it might operate to their advantage. At all events, they would have a just title to ask, that if no prohibition should be allowed in their favour, at least some of the existing prohibitions, which were so obnoxious and injurious, should also have a stop put to them. He was perfectly ready to allow that nothing could be worse than that this country should adopt an exclusion of the continental commerce, in imitation of Buonaparté; nothing could be more futile, as well as unprincipled, than that we should constitute ourselves a nation of all sellers and no buyers. But let there be some consistency in our policy. What had been the principle of proceeding with respect to the colonies? Though, according to fair principles, colonies had no right to expect from the mother country any thing but protection of their condition, yet they had repeatedly applied for protection of their different branches of trade and produce. Not many sessions ago, an act was passed to protect Canada against the importation of Prussian timber. Was this wise or prudent? If it was, what was the fair application of the argument? Was it not at least this?—"Don't, if you think it wrong, add any prohibition for the benefit of the agricultural capitalist, but at all events take away those prohibitions which benefit others to his injury." He came now more to the detail of his subject; and he would first refer to the laws respecting wool. Much as that commodity was protected by our laws, yet he believed he might safely state, that less attention was paid to the improvement of wool in this country than in almost any other country in Europe. Much finer wool was found abroad than at home. He thought that a small duty of 6*d.* or 1*s.* on every imported pack of fine wool would, without materially affecting the price to the consumer, be a considerable relief to the farmer: at least, he was quite sure that as a tax it would be infinitely less injurious than the tax on agricultural horses —a tax which struck at the very root of industry, and checked the essential machinery of the agricultural labourer. He thought, too, that an additional duty might fairly be laid on rape-seed and some other seeds, though clover was not one of them as it was consumed only by the farmer. He did not see that any particular advantage would arise from the repeal of the warehousing system. He was disposed to allow that the prohibiting price of 80*s.* was now equal to 86*s.*; and so far, therefore, the protection to the English farmer was higher than before. But the evil lay too deep to be reached by such remedies. If government even had a source of treasure in the moon at their absolute disposal, and would lend it to the farmers, the farmers would not be the better for it. They would be as far as ever from possessing the possibility of paying the 5 per cent. for the loan; they would have no chance of paying the debt. He did hope, therefore, that all idea of bounty on exportation would be given up, because it was impossible to do good by raising money on the foreigner for application at home. There were two very important branches of this subject remaining,—the tithes and the poor-rates, into which he should not now go at length, though he thought it right to say a few words about them. He was the more anxious to express his own view on the subject of tithes, because it differed extremely from the views of many persons who had considered the matter with the greatest attention. He did not think it wise or prudent to press for a commutation of tithes: for he believed that under the present system the farmer paid less than the real value of the tenth part. There were many persons sufficiently willing to clamour against tithes, and perhaps they had a secret feeling or wish that such a species of remuneration should be done away with altogether; but he apprehended that, whatever might be the wishes of particular persons, none would venture to suggest any alteration of the system, except on the principle of a fair exchange. It was well known, that the value of the tithe was very different to the holder and to the receiver. Distance, difficulty of carriage, want of care, neccessary waste, all tended to diminish the value of the article to the receiver, and this depreciation would of course be taken into the account in any system of commutation. He had no doubt that every farmer in the kingdom would rather abide by the tithing system, than pay a compensation which should be founded on an estimate of the real value of the tithed articles. On the subject of poor-rates, he should merely suggest, that it appeared to him that the act of Elizabeth was much misinterpreted in common practice. It embraced three classes: first, the idle and profligate, who were to be compelled to work; secondly, the able-bodied, whether married or single, who had no calling, and for whom employment was to be found; and, thirdly, the old, impotent, and lame, and such as were poor, yet unable to work. It never was intended, however, to find provision for those who were strong and able to work, in order to support them in idleness, and as a mere burthen on society. He should conclude his address by moving two resolutions, which he was anxious should be taken into the serious consideration of the committee, which might dispose of them as it pleased: all he wished was to throw out something which appeared to him to be useful. His first resolution would relate to the acts against the exportation of wool. The prohibition on this subject was of the most rigid description: the severest interdiction was put on the exportation of wool or live sheep; yet he believed that the most fanciful speculatist would allow that the penalties, which were a disgrace to the statute book, could not promote any of the best interests of the country. There was one act in particular still to be found in the books, which gentlemen would hardly believe to be possible. By a statute of Elizabeth, any person convicted of exporting wool was liable to a year's imprisonment, and to have his left hand cut off, and nailed up in the most conspicuous part of the nearest market-town. He would not say that any great advantage would arise from the exportation of wool, but the honour of the country required that those prohibitions should be repealed. He did not ask for prohibition protections, or monopolies to protect this or that manufacture or produce: all he wanted was a free and open market for all useful commodities. He was anxious, therefore, that all the laws, primary and secondary, as to the exportation of wool, its carriage coast-wise, and its internal transmission, should be repealed: that, at least, Englishmen might enjoy a free, open trade in their own staple commodity. The next subject to which he should direct the attention of the House, was, the growth of tobacco. He saw no reason why this country might not compete with Holland at least, or even with Maryland or Virginia. He could not show from direct facts, but he could argue from the evidence of fair inference, that the cultivation of tobacco might reasonably be expected to flourish very much in this country. He had looked to the preambles of the several acts which prohibited the cultivation of this plant, and they furnished him with good indirect proof. The first act passed on this subject was the 12th of Charles 2nd, which took notice of the growth of tobacco here; but for the encouragement of the colonies imposed a duty of 40*s*. a rod on all tobacco grown here. In a few years a second act was passed, which mentioned the great increase of cultivation of this article, and imposed a fine of 10*l*. per rod; then came the 22d of Charles 2nd, which imposed a still higher penalty in consequence of the increased cultivation. From all this, it was a fair ground of inference, that tobacco would grow in this country. But a recent fact would prove it further. In 1782 the penalties imposed on one farm in Yorkshire alone, for the growth of tobacco, were no less than 36,000*l*. The tobacco plantation was indeed destroyed, but it was pretty plainly proved that the soil at least was favourable to its cultivation. From these circumstances he thought that there could be no reasonable doubt of the success of such a mode of cultivation, nor did the ground of prohibition on account of the colonies of Virginia and Maryland now exist. Perhaps it was not the least recommendation of this plant, that the culture of it was thought a good preparative for the growth of wheat. He would merely say, that tobacco, if grown, might be very fairly considered as an object of taxation. He should therefore now submit for the deliberation and disposal of the committee his two resolutions:—

1st. "That it would be expedient to allow the exportation of wool duty free; and also that wool should be conveyed internally or coast-ways in such a manner as the persons concerned in such conveyance thought fit.—2nd. That the cultivation of tobacco should be permitted under such regulations and restrictions as may be deemed consistent with the interest of the revenue."

The chairman suggested, that the resolutions should be brought forward at some subsequent stage of the proceedings, as there was already a resolution before the committee not yet disposed of.

Mr. *F. Lewis* acquiesced, and withdrew his resolutions for the present.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* then suggested, that as it was now a late hour, and as the House had sat very late on the preceding night, and were likely to be occupied to a late hour the next night, it would be better to adjourn the debate. He should, therefore, with the leave of the House, move that the chairman report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

This was accordingly done. The orders of the day were then disposed of, and the House adjourned at twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, March 29.

Charges against Lord Ellenborough.] Lord *Cochrane* rose, he said, to present an additional charge against lord Ellenborough, for his conduct upon the trial of Charles Random de Berenger and others.

The *Speaker* observed, that it was the duty of the noble lord, according to the usage of parliament, to state the nature of his charge before it was presented.

Lord *Cochrane* stated, that it was a charge against lord Ellenborough of partiality, misrepresentation, injustice, and oppression in his conduct upon the trial alluded to, and upon subsequent proceedings connected therewith, particularly in refusing to hear him (lord C.) upon his first application to the court of King's-bench for a new trial, and in rejecting his second application upon the ground that all the persons implicated in the same indictment did not appear to concur in the application, which ground he (lord C.) conceived to be utterly fallacious and to involve a manifest injustice irreconcilable with any principle of law or common sense.

The charge being read by the clerk, it further charged lord Ellenborough with countenancing and sanctioning the misrepresentations of justice Le Blanc in pronouncing sentence upon the occasion referred to. Upon the charge being read, lord Cochrane moved that it should be printed.

Mr. *Lockhart* said, he could not consent to the printing of this paper. The noble lord, in requiring justice for himself, or in demanding it against other persons, should take care to confine himself within the rules which justice prescribed; and ought carefully to comply with those precedents of accusation which the House had, in former times, entertained. He understood, that originally the noble lord's accusation was confined solely to the lord chief justice of the court of King's-bench; but the article which he now wished to have printed and circulated throughout the country, purporting to be an accusation of lord Ellenborough, was, in fact, a charge against the judges of the court of King's-bench, though they were not named. Now, if all the judges were considered to be implicated in this business, the noble lord ought to have fairly introduced them in his charges. The former accusation was against lord Ellenborough, as a single judge, sitting at Nisi Prius; but the acts spoken of in the present charge were done by the whole court. But, independent of this, the noble lord had distinctly charged another judge—a most learned, able, honest, and upright judge. He had made a charge against Mr. Justice Le Blanc, which he had no opportunity to answer. The noble lord stated in this article, that Mr. Justice Le Blanc had passed on him a sentence which he considered unjust and oppressive—and that, in passing such sentence, he had made many statements, that were not warranted by the evidence. The learned judge certainly was not included in the accusation; but it left the poison to be circulated throughout the realm, without his having the power of justifying his conduct. The noble lord had named Mr. Justice Le Blanc, although he had not directly accused him; and, by so proceeding, he rendered it impossible for that learned judge to enter on his defence. He hoped the House had too much respect for the character of the judges, to entertain or warrant an insinuation of this sort to pass, which threw a shade on their integrity, without giving full opportunity of refutation. He must object to such a mode of inculpating a judge. According to the nature of this charge, it appeared that the proceedings of the chief justice must be incorporated with those of the whole court; and against the whole court he thought the noble lord should have proceeded. He was sure that, on reflection, the noble lord must feel, either in vindicating himself, or accusing others, that he should keep himself within the limits of justice.

Lord *Cochrane* said, he had made no complaint against Mr. Justice Le Blanc, whom he supposed to have no knowledge of the proceedings on the trial, except from lord Ellenborough's notes. He therefore imputed no blame to Mr. Justice Le Blanc, but begged the House to recollect, that the complaint was against the chief justice of England, for a falsification of evidence. He believed, from the state of the House, that not three members had attended to the charge while the clerk was reading it.

Mr. *Sturges Bourne* said, that the following words would be found in the charge:—"for countenancing, sanctioning, and authorizing the misrepresentations of sir Simon Le Blanc, when pronouncing the sentence of the court." Surely nothing could be more plain than this. It was a clear charge against sir Simon Le Blanc, for having misrepresented facts in passing sentence on the defendant.

Lord *Cochrane* said, that sir Simon Le Blanc was not charged with any wilful misrepresentation whatever. The learned judge had uttered misrepresentations, in point of fact—having been misled by the notes of the chief justice. If it were the pleasure of the House to reject the article wholly, he should not oppose their decision.

Mr. *Sturges Bourne* reiterated his former statement, that the article contained a charge against sir Simon Le Blanc.

Sir *John Simeon* said, the reasonable and proper mode would be, for the noble lord to withdraw the article, and, having corrected it, to submit it again to the

House. There certainly did appear to be a charge of wilful misrepresentation made against sir Simon Le Blanc, which (however willing the House were to receive the charges made against the person formally accused), they could scarcely consent to be laid on their table.

Lord *Cochrane* said, after the statement he had made, that he imputed no wilful misrepresentation to sir Simon Le Blanc, he thought nothing farther was necessary.

Mr. *Vesey Fitzgerald* recommended the noble lord to adopt the suggestion of sir J. Simeon. It would be very improper that such a charge should go out to the public against Mr. Justice Le Blanc. As the noble lord meant no accusation of that judge, he had much better withdraw it and amend it.

Lord *Cochrane* said, it was stated as plainly as possible in the charge, that the misrepresentations arose with lord Ellenborough.

Sir *George Clerke* was sorry to oppose the receiving of the charge; but, after what the noble lord had said, and the suggestions that had been made, he hoped it would be withdrawn. He read part of a passage in the charge, which stated that Mr. Justice Le Blanc knew the evidence was misrepresented.

Lord *Cochrane* explained, that this referred to the affidavits.

Mr. *Lyttelton* said, if the noble lord persisted in pressing his motion, he would place the House in a very painful situation. He wished the noble lord to have complete justice rendered to him; but it appeared that he here made an accusation not merely against lord Ellenborough, but against sir Simon Le Blanc. The noble lord said, he did not charge the learned judge with wilful misrepresentation. If so, he surely could feel no unwillingness to alter the expressions. In all fairness and equity he ought to do this. If the noble lord did not, he should be obliged to vote against his motion; and he was sure, in so doing, no person would impute to him a wish to put a stop to this solemn proceeding.

Lord *Cochrane* expressed himself willing to attend to it, in compliance with the feeling of the House, and the charge was accordingly withdrawn.

BUTTER AND CHEESE TRADE.] Mr. *Robinson* moved the order of the day, for the House to resolve itself into a committee of the whole House, to consider of the Butter Trade of the United Kingdom. The same being read,

Mr. *R. Gordon* moved, "That it be an instruction to the said committee, that they have the power to consider of the laws relating to cheese;" which was agreed to.

The House having resolved itself into the committee,

Mr. *Robinson* said, that after the discussion of the preceding evening, in which the question of the butter trade was referred to, he did not think it necessary for him to trouble the committee with many observations on the subject. He last night had stated his objections, generally, to prohibitory duties; but, from the situation in which Ireland was placed, he had acceded to the wishes of those gentlemen who were desirous that protection should be afforded to the butter trade of that country. All, therefore, which he should state to the committee on the present occasion was, the amount of the duty which he meant to propose, and the grounds which induced him to fix it at that particular rate. At present, the duty on the importation of foreign butter was 5*s.* 1½*d.* per cwt.; and he proposed to substitute a duty of 20*s.* per cwt. on foreign butter imported in British ships, and of 25*s.* per cwt. on that which was imported in foreign ships. With respect to the duty of 25*s.* on butter imported in foreign ships, he was aware that many objections might be made to it, by those who were interested in the foreign butter trade. But, he believed, unless that sum were adopted, the object which he had in view would not be effected; and whatever difficulty he felt in proposing any duty at all, when he did determine, and had made up his mind on the subject, he was bound to propose such a duty as would fully effect what he intended. He believed the butter principally came over in very small ships, and at a trifling expense; 20*s.* would not, therefore, be sufficient, with reference to them, and he had proposed 25*s.* Many persons, he believed, thought this duty not sufficiently high. He knew it was so considered by those who were connected with the Irish butter trade, who wished a duty of 30*s.* to be imposed. On the other hand, the merchants engaged in the Dutch butter trade would say, that a duty of 25*s.* was too great, but that 10*s.* or thereabouts, would be sufficient. Now, taking the mean between 10*s.* and 30*s.* he thought he struck on the point that ought to satisfy both parties. He then moved, "That it is the opinion of this committee, that in lieu of the duties now payable on all butter imported into the United Kingdom from foreign countries, there be levied a duty of 20*s.* for every one hundred weight of all foreign butter imported into the United Kingdom in British ships, and a duty of 25*s.* for every one hundred weight of all foreign butter imported into the United Kingdom in foreign ships."

Sir *John Newport* said, that this subject was of peculiar importance, as it affected a branch of the trade of Ireland, amounting, in value, to very nearly one-fifth of the whole exports of that country, and which, in a great degree, enabled her to pay for the British manufactures that were consumed there. If they considered this subject, they would find, as in every other connected with the commerce of Ireland, that the prosperity of the English manufacturer and that of the Irish trader, were inseparably connected together; and that he who would set up one against the other, proceeded on a principle that tended to ruin both. When, also, they considered that this trade carried some little comfort, and some share of wealth, to the poorest farmers in Ireland, they would see that it was an object of great magnitude to the welfare of the country, as connected with its tranquillity, morality, and industry. The right hon. gentleman said, there were persons who thought the duty he had proposed was too low. Sir John candidly confessed that he was one of those individuals; and, when he stated that the trade produced 2,500,000*l.* annually, he conceived its importance fully justified his feeling on that point. The House, in deciding this question, ought to look to the situation in which Ireland stood, when placed with respect to this trade, in competition with Holland, and other countries on the continent, that supplied England with butter. In the first place, they must consider their comparative exemption from taxation; next, their vicinity to the British market; and lastly, the facility with which they transported their produce, in small vessels, which incurred very trifling charges. Whereas, butter was exported from Ireland in very large vessels, which were liable to the payment of heavy freights, and ran all the risks of an extensive navigation. Therefore, to set Ireland on a fair footing with the continent, required a very considerable protection. He hoped, that, in the present instance, the duty imposed was not intended rather to procure a productive revenue for this country, than to give a just protection to the trade of Ireland. If, however, the experience of a year proved, that it was calculated, not to protect the Irish butter trade, but merely to produce an increased revenue for England, he hoped the right hon. gentleman would propose to parliament a duty that would be sufficiently large to protect the Irish manufacturer from the inequality of the competition.

Sir *Frederick Flood* observed, that having waited on the right hon. gentleman for the purpose of making some representations on this subject, he observed so much urbanity in his manner, and so much candour in his statements, as induced him to believe that the right hon. gentleman had the welfare of Ireland in general, as well as of his (sir Frederick's) constituents, at heart; and therefore, he went away flattered in his feelings that the right hon. gentleman would have proposed a larger protecting duty than he had done; neither was he without hope at the present moment that he would amend his proposition, Ireland was in a most distressed state. That country had, indeed, very little left, but the revenue derived from this trade. Grain was of no value. It would not produce the money which the grower had expended. As to cattle, there was no market for them. And such was the poverty of the people, that he could safely say, the inhabitants of the county he had the honour to represent had not the means of paying the parliamentary taxes, and the county rates. In this state of things, it was absulutely necessary, that the butter trade should be protected; and he denied that the duty of 20*s.* on the importation of foreign butter in British ships, and of 25*s.* on foreign butter imported in foreign ships, could effect that object. It would rather act as a stimulus to the industry of the foreigner, who paid no taxes; and the consequence would be, that this country would be overwhelmed with foreign butter, and the Irish butter grower [A laugh] would be ruined. He should, therefore propose as an amendment, that 25*s.* should be substituted for 20*s.*—and 30*s.* for 25*s.* in the Resolution before the committee.

Mr. *Vesey Fitzgerald* hoped the hon. baronet would not, in the present state of this question, press his amendment. The right hon. baronet (sir J. Newport) had expressed a hope, if the duty now proposed were, after a year's experience, found insufficient for protection, that his right hon. friend would come forward with such an alteration as would meet the object in view. The disposition of his majesty's ministers, as might be inferred from the observations made on the preceding evening, and on the present occasion, by his right hon. friend, was, to propose a sufficient duty, if that now submitted to the committee were found ineffectual. It was by no means considered as a measure introduced for the purpose of rendering the revenue more productive to this country, but was intended to give relief to the agriculturalist of Ireland. The right hon. baronet thought, that the inequality of competition arose, in a great degree, from the exemption of foreign countries from taxation, as compared with the burthens imposed on this. But Holland, which was the principal competition that Ireland had to contend with, was not so free from taxation, as might be imagined. It was not the exemption from burthens that enabled the "butter-growers" there, as his hon. friend had facetiously termed them, to undersell those of Ireland. The productive nature of their soil, and their proximity to the great market this country afforded them—these were their advantages, and against these a just protection ought to be granted. The importance of the butter-trade to Ireland and to this country, was very fairly stated by the right hon. baronet. In the last fifteen years, the increase in the amount of the export of butter from Ireland, and in the necessarily improved state of agriculture, was signal and progressive. In 1801, the year after the Union, the quantity of butter exported from the several ports of Ireland, was 225,500 cwt. In 1814, it was 462,000 cwt.; being more than double since 1801. In the last year, when they had to meet the competition of the foreign merchant, the quantity exported was 432,000 cwt. the average value of which was 2,269,000*l.* This statement would, no doubt, prove satisfactory to those amongst whom there was no dissentient voice on the propriety of aiding the domestic interests of Ireland.

Sir *Nicholas Colthurst* expressed his satisfaction at the introduction of this measure, and hoped it would produce great relief.

Sir *John Newport* recommended the hon. baronet to withdraw his amendment.

Sir *F. Flood* said, he would comply with the suggestion, as he was not supported in his motion by the Irish members, whose assistance he had counted on, in forwarding a measure of such importance to the interests of their native country.

Mr. *Ponsonby* thought the observation of the hon. baronet was rather invidious when he insinuated, that those members who had not supported his amendment were not disposed, as much as others, to watch over the interests of Ireland. He hoped the people of Ireland would not suppose that he would neglect their interests, when a fair opportunity occurred for supporting them. He, however, did not think it would be wise towards Ireland, to press the present measure too far, nor could she expect that the interests of this country would be sacrificed to her. In his opinion, the gentlemen on the other side had gone far enough for a case of experiment. If it were found necessary, they could, at a future period, proceed further.

Sir *F. Flood* assured the right hon. gentleman that he quite misunderstood him, if he supposed that he meant to charge him with being careless or negligent to the interests of Ireland. His feeling was entirely different.

Sir *J. Newport* said, he would not agree to the amendment, because he did not like to press a proposition on the House that might create a diversity of opinion.

The original motion was then carried.

Mr. *R. Gordon* rose to move a resolution respecting cheese, which he maintained stood on the same footing as butter. The duties on both should operate on the same principle. There was but one distinction on the subject, which was, that the interest of Ireland was not connected with the trade in cheese: but if cheese was not protected, the farmers in Holland would send more cheese than ever, after the protection for home butter. Such was the present state of the cheese market, that a cheese-factor from Cheshire had informed him, that the London dealers would make no contracts for the inferior country cheeses, but only for the best Cheshire and Gloucestershire, as the Dutch cheeses were preferred to our own inferior ones. He could foresee no argument against his proposition, in which he hoped for general concurrence. He would quadruple the protecting duty on cheese, on the same principle as the right hon. gentleman had acted respecting butter. He then moved, "That it is the opinion of this committee, that in lieu of the duties now payable on all cheese imported into the united kingdom from foreign countries, there be levied a duty of 16*s.* for every one hundred weight of all foreign cheese imported into the united kingdom in British ships, and a duty of 20*s.* for every one hundred weight of all foreign cheese imported into the united kingdom in foreign ships."

Sir *T. Acland* expressed himself in favour of the proposition, without which the cheese-manufacturers, in the different counties of England would be very much oppressed.

Mr. *Robinson* said, he had found some difficulties on this subject, but he had no wish to press his ideas against what might appear a general feeling in the House. He did not think that the question respecting cheese stood exactly on the same grounds, as that regarding butter. The hon. gentleman had proceeded on the same principle with cheese as he had himself done as to butter: but it appeared that, though in 1815, the importation of butter had increased as compared with the importation of 1815, yet that the importation of cheese had diminished one-third under the operation of the existing duty: therefore he doubted the necessity for increasing the duty on cheese to the same extent of the principle. If his impressions appeared wrong, it was his duty to acquiesce with other gentlemen. He begged them to look at the case altogether.

Mr. *Methuen* said, it was to be considered what the effect on the cheese trade could or might be, if it was left without the protection given to butter. The cheese dealers ought not to suffer by the advantages given to the butter dealers, in any fair way of looking at the case altogether.

Mr. *Hall* said, that the imports of 1815 showed the necessity of the hon. member's resolution.

Mr. *Robinson* said, that those imports, though nominally in the year 1815, were only up to the 25th of January of that year; and he would recommend his hon. friend to take the official valuation of two years, instead of this first view.

Mr. *Egerton* expressed himself in favour of the additional duty on foreign butter.

Mr. *Thompson* was not altogether in favour of this system of protecting duties; at all events, if adopted in one case, they ought to be in others; for if the foreigner found the butter market closed upon him, he would try the cheese one.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, the hon. mover was in his calculation misled by a false analogy. He thought, from a review of the existing duties, that the addition of 12 per cent. would be sufficient.

Mr. *Ponsonby* was of opinion, that an equal protection was due to the cheese and butter trade.

Mr. *Gordon* stated, that his only object was that both should be placed on the same footing.

The resolution was then agreed to.

SEIZURE OF GOODS ON BOARD THE ASSIDUOUS TRANSPORT.] Mr. *Brougham* rose to state, that he had some days ago moved for an account of certain seizures on board some of his majesty's transports, and the only papers that were presented in consequence of this motion, were some relative to a correspondence between sir Home Popham and the treasury. Now, the subject to which he alluded was this—a seizure had been made on board the ordnance transport Assiduous at Woolwich; a variety of contraband goods were found on board, seized, and lodged in the custom-house, together with the names of the parties to whom the property was addressed. A list containing those particulars was lodged in the customs, and though it could only convey an inedequate portion of information to the House, it was yet important that it should be forthcoming, for, in fact, it contained the only information which, under the circumstances of the case, the House was likely to obtain. He would, therefore, first, move for copies of all correspondence between the boards of customs and treasury, touching the seizure of the transport Assiduous. The hon. and learned gentleman said, that, as the owners of the transport disavowed any connexion with the fraud in question, and as they had memorialed the board upon the subject, he felt himself bound to move, secondly, for a copy of the said memorial. The third return for which he should move was for copies of all papers, inventories, lists, reports, or other documents transmitted to the board of customs relative to this transaction. The fourth paper for which he should move was, for a list of the names of the persons to whom the packages were addressed, distinguishing the names of those to whom the packages were addresed, distinguishing the goods found in each package, and the goods which each packet was stated to contain.

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The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* was not aware how such a list could be made up.

Mr. *Brougham* was determined that such a list should be produced as he was resolved to bring this business to light, and to sift it to the very bottom. The public could only get proper information by the production of every paper, and he thought it was proper that all persons who were on board the vessel, or in the slightest degree connected with it, should be examined. The mode by which this could be effected was only by moving for information in various shapes. He would not rest satisfied with a general statement on the part of the officers and crew, but would call them to give their solemn deposition in a proper place. He had heard on very good, nay, he would call it unquestionable, authority, that these goods to which he alluded, had been seized in the form of ordnance stores [Hear, hear!]. They had purposely been packed up in the manner of rockets or returned ordnance, and when broken up by the officers, with iron tools, it was found that the parcels in the inside had a very different address from the packages without. On that point he was determined to be satisfied, and satisfied he would be only on good grounds.

The motion was agreed to.

JOINT POST-MASTER GENERAL.] Mr. *Brougham* said, that in consequence of no answer being returned to a question which he had put, he should move for an account of the number of days which lord Clancarty attended at the post-office, during the time he held the office of joint post master general, the number of papers officially signed by him during that period, together with the dates of his appointment and resignation, and the amount of his salary.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, it certainly happened to lord Clancarty, as it did to others who had held that situation, that he probably took very little share in the official business of the post-office; and as he thought the motion, if agreed to, would by no means answer the object in view, he should feel it his duty to move the previous question upon it.

Lord *Castlereagh* observed, that lord Clancarty received no emoluments when he first went to the continent. His appointment was then considered as likely to create only a temporary absence; but it afterwards continued, and with the most signal advantage to the country, as well as with the most marked display of talent and ability on the part of lord Clancarty. It was, indeed, with considerable reluctance, and violence to his own feelings, that he had consented to withdraw from the situation which he held in this country. He had already stated, that he received no emolument, directly connected with his mission, though he had performed essential services at a very critical moment.

Mr. *Law* observed, that the only charge which lord Clancarty threw upon the public, was the excess of expense incurred, beyond his own personal fortune.

Mr. *Rose* bore testimony to the distinguished ability of lord Clancarty, and to the great service which he had rendered the country, by the discharge of his functions abroad. With respect to the performance of his duty as post-master general, he could only say, that if the return were made to the hon. and learned gentleman's motion, it would not answer the object in view. From the manner in which the business of the post-office was transacted, that return might bear upon the face of it an apparently unimportant discharge of duty, while in fact all the duty that really devolved upon the office had been performed.

Mr. *Brougham* said, that nothing could be more satisfactory than the explanations to which his motion had led; and he begged to observe, that in making it, he was not influenced in the remotest degree by any invidious feeling towards lord Clancarty. What he wanted was, to illustrate the nature of the office itself, and he must say, that he thought he had completely attained his object. He did not blame lord Clancarty for holding the office or for receiving the salary, but he did blame the system upon which the office was still kept up and maintained. It was evidently a sinecure in the strictest sense of the word; for it now appeared, that any man might undertake it, and that without any detriment to the full discharge of its functions, he might be beyond the seas all the while he filled it. With regard to the circumstance of lord Clancarty receiving no salary or emolument when he first went abroad, there was a striking difference between the statement of the noble lord and the hon. gentleman who spoke after him; and he could not help saying, that whatever private sources of information the hon. gentleman might have, he was more disposed to trust to the accuracy of the statement made by the noble lord. The lord said he had no emoluments, but only his expenses; while the hon. gentleman affirmed that he had nothing but the excess of his expenses beyond his private fortune. If the latter were true, he should say that lord Clancarty had not been well treated, if he were allowed to spend a single shilling of his own private fortune in performing a public duty. As he said before, however, he apprehended the official information of the noble lord would be found more correct than the private intelligence of the hon. gentleman. No doubt, lord Clancarty, like all others who were sent upon public missions abroad, made no direct charge to the country for emoluments, but had the expenses paid which were attendant upon the mission: and as such missions now went, he thought that was the most safe and comfortable bargain which any diplomatic agent could make for himself. A sort of *carte blanche* was granted, and all the bills drawn upon the treasury were honoured without any questions. But how stood the case as to the situation of joint post-master general? It appeared that all his expenses were paid, and over and above that, he received the 2500*l.* per annum attached to that office. The question therefore was, whether, under such circumstances, the place itself was not completely a useless one, and whether it would not be the duty of the House to cut it off altogether as a sinecure.

Lord *Castlereagh* observed, that lord Clancarty's appointment being, like all special missions, not attached to any fixed place, and uncertain how long it might last, the expenses attendant upon it were of course paid; but it did not, therefore, follow that all expenses of a personal nature would be paid. There were many, indeed, which in point of honour could not be charged to the public. With respect to his enjoying the salary of joint post master general, it should be recollected that the labours of lord Clancarty abroad were as great and greater than those he performed at home, and for them he received no direct emolument. As to the motion of the hon. and learned gentleman, if the return were made, it would afford no satisfactory information as to the real extent of official duty performed by lord Clancarty. Besides, it was to be remembered, that in addition to the function of joint post master general he discharged the laborious and important duty of president of the board of trade, and in such a way as reflected the highest credit upon his abilities and assiduity.

Mr. *Baring* said, he felt it his duty to say that he believed no person had ever given more general satisfaction at the board of trade than lord Clancarty; but still he thought it more desirable to attach salaries to the offices in which the service was really performed, than to place persons in arduous situations without a proper salary, and then remunerate them by an office in which no duties were required. Lord Clancarty was gone abroad, his place was filled by the marquis of Salisbury, and no duty whatever was done; and this was the strongest possible case to exemplify the inconvenience of rewarding laborious offices without salary by sinecures with a high appointment.

Mr. *Brougham* said, that in consequence of the explanation that had been given, he should withdraw his motion; but there was this fallacy in the explanation that had been given as to the board of trade; lord Clancarty was not the only person presiding at that board; there was a joint controller; one of these was doing nothing, and in lord Clancarty's absence the vice-president was found sufficient.

Mr. *Bathurst* begged the House would remember, that ever since Mr. Burke's bill, which abolished the board of trade, it had been found that the country required a performance of the duties belonging to that board, and that these had been transferred to other offices; and the question was, whether it would be better to recur to the board of trade, which Mr. Burke's bill had abolished? But whenever the House took the question up, he hoped they would take it up independent of individual considerations.

Sir *J. Newport* said, that Mr. Burke abolished the board of trade, intending that it should be supplied by another to do the duty. A committee of the privy council had been appointed for that purpose. He thought that a board of this sort was necessary; and if so, it would be better to pay the individuals employed directly, and not under any pretence to keep up a sinecure place.

The motion was then withdrawn.

BANK LOAN BILL.] On the order of the day, for the third reading of the bill for empowering the governor and company of the Bank of England, to advance the sum of six millions towards the supply for the service of the year 1816,

Mr. *Grenfell* rose to state, that notwithstanding the numerous discussions which this bill had already undergone; discussions that had failed in producing on the part of the Bank of England any defence against the exorbitant demand they were about to make on the public; notwithstanding, he repeated, all those discussions, he retained his former opinions on this subject. The Chancellor of the Exchequer (in this case the unwilling auxiliary of the bank) had not even attempted to controvert his opinions. It was impossible for him, therefore to allow this opportunity to pass without again calling the attention of the public to this particular branch of their interest. On the present occasion the right hon. the chancellor of the exchequer, instead of resisting this wanton and unreasonable demand on the part of the bank, and thereby obtaining the praise of every disinterested man in the country, had culpably (he did not mean it disrespectfully) acquiesced in the interested and extravagant views of the bank, and had sacrificed, to the injury of the public, from 2 to 300,000*l.* a-year, for no other purpose than to swell the enormous and overwhelming treasures of this opulent corporation. The ingenuity of the defenders of this measure could not controvert the position, that the state of the question was this—"You, the public, have for the last eight years, and now have, deposited in the bank a stationary and permanent sum of eight millions and a half, out of which you have received, free of interest, an advance of three millions and a half." Was it not absurd to talk of an advance, as it was miscalled, under such a state of account between the bank and the public? And now, when 6,000,000*l.* was wanted, an interest of 240,000*l.* a-year was required for the advance; and this was, by a misapplication of terms, called a loan! Such a designation of the transaction was a mere mockery, and an insult upon the public, besides being calculated to deceive them as to the real circumstances of the case. Parliamentary interference had done a great deal, and would do more on occasions of this kind. It had already augmented the stamp revenue from 30 to 40,000*l.* by the adoption of the late parliamentary regulations. The next positive advantage was that which flowed from the present bill, by which a saving of 60,000*l.* a-year had been effected by borrowing 6,000,000*l.* at 4 instead of 5 per cent. The interference of the House had on those occasions alone created a saving to the public of not less than 100,000*l.* This advantage seemed to be doubted by his hon. friend below him; but why had not the public the benefit of this regulation in 1806, 1813, and 1814, when the bank held, as they did now, the same public funds? At some future period the country might derive considerable advantage from the unclaimed dividends, to which the attention of parliament had been directed by an hon. friend of his (Mr. Bankes) and from which no less a sum than a million of money might be obtained. He stated it not on his own but on the best legal authority, that there was nothing in the act by which the charter was granted to the bank which would prevent parliament from taking the subject into consideration, and making such regulations as they might think most conducive to the public interest. Notwithstanding the way in which the proposition had been received by the right hon. the chancellor of the exchequer, he felt it his duty again to press on that right hon. gentleman, should he extend to the bank the term of the restriction on their cash payments, the expediency of stipulating, on the part of the public, for a participation in the enormous profits accruing to the Bank from the exclusive circulation of their paper as the currency of the country. In all he had said he meant no offence to the individuals who had the management of the concerns of the Bank, for many of whom, on the contrary, he entertained great respect; but he objected to the system which had been pursued, and should certainly therefore, take the proper time to move the amendment to which he had already alluded.

Mr. *Finlay* thought that the situation in which the public stood with relation to the bank of England, was neither more nor less than that of paying a large sum for the management of its own money. It seemed to him, that by the bill, the public was exposed to an unnecessary expense of 240,000*l.*, owing to the amount of the balances of public money remaining in the hands of the bank, and which ought to be withdrawn.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that this advance had been made by the bank at a time when it was most wanting, and at a rate of interest below what would be demanded in the regular money market; so that, by obtaining six millions at 4 per cent. there was a direct saving to the country of 60,000*l.* a year. Amidst all the censures that had been lavished by gentlemen on the arrangement, no attempt had been made to prove that one more advantageous could have been made. He would not have risen to address the House but for the mistake that had been made by the hon. member for Glasgow, in asserting that this money was part of what actually belonged to the public. Whatever balances lay in the hands of the bank of England, were continued there by various acts of parliament, so that the accounts could not be now withdrawn. He censured the idea of blending all the accounts into one—which was not only inconsistent with the acts of parliament, but also with the due administration of the different public services, all of which required distinct accounts. Such a plan would also render it necessary to keep a much larger aggregate sum than there was at present, to meet the demands of the various offices. That amount was, during the war, much greater than it might be in time of peace, and the treasury would take care to keep it as low as possible. The money now advanced by the bank would not be withdrawn before two years; but might then, whether the accounts were increased or not.

Mr. *Ponsonby* thought the argument of the chancellor of the exchequer rather unfortunate. He had acknowledged that the bank of England enjoyed a great advantage, secured to it by acts of parliament—and for that very reason it was the duty of the right hon. gentleman to make a better bargain for the country. Mr. Ponsonby complained of there being any bargain made with the bank, without a previous communication with the House; particularly as, in the former session, it seemed to be understood that, in case of any arrangement being intended with the bank, some intimation would have been given. It was on that presumption that no motion had then been pressed relative to the subject; and having looked into the common vehicles of what passed in that House, he found that he did make an observation to that effect at some length, to which the chancellor of the exchequer gave a kind of nodding silent assent; so that it was taken for granted that no arrangement would be made without the participation of the House. No motion, therefore, was made. It now, however, appeared, that the chancellor of the exchequer not feeling that so strongly as he did, had concluded a bargain, and thence resulted the mischief which all complained of; for in reality, no chancellor of the exchequer, placed in the situation in which the right hon. gentleman was placed, could be a match for the bank of England. None but that House could oppose the bank with any tolerable prospect of success. It would perhaps be said, that he was desirous of running down the bank, and anxious to shake its credit; but he really valued the bank, and was as sensible of its services as any one. He would not, however, on that account be prevented from looking, in all our transactions with that corporation, to obtain strict justice. When those conversations relating to the state of the bank first commenced, much was said of the danger resulting to its stability from the attempts made to participate in its immense profits. But had its stability been affected by any concession already made; and would it be endangered by any that might be made hereafter? The advantage supposed to be derived by the public from the present agreement was 60,000*l.* a year, but in reality this advance, at 4 per cent. subjected the bank to no difficulty. The bank did not advance a single shilling of its own money; the advance was made from the public balances. He therefore could not assent to the agreement; and he was confident that had the House been apprized of the intention of the chancellor of the exchequer to negociate with the bank, that such measures would have been adopted, as would have enabled the public to treat to much greater advantage; but by the treasury assuming to itself the powers of that House, those advantages were lost. He could not consider the House bound by the bargain; he would therefore negative the bill; and if his hon. friend would propose his amendment, it should meet his entire concurrence. To his hon. friend the country was seriously indebted; for to his exertions alone might it be attributed that the public were better off by 100,000*l.* than they before had been.

Sir *Joseph Yorke* considered those exertions which the right hon. gentleman so highly commended, as directly tending to annihilate all the fair profits of the bank. He would, therefore, advise all the bank stock proprietors to divide as soon as possible, if they hoped to save any thing from the hon. gentleman.

Lord *Folkestone* said, he was not master of the details of public business, and did not know practically the mode in which the transactions between the bank and the government were carried on, or how far they could be simplified, so as to render necessary a smaller balance in the hands of the former for the use of the latter; but he thought the principle of economizing business, now so generally adopted in the management of extensive private concerns, might be introduced with advantage into those of the public, and thus reduce the quantity of deposits requisite to meet occasional demands. By this means a great saving would be effected, and the public would derive that interest from its own money which the bank now drew in its stead. He wished to call the attention of the House to the circumstances which had lately been pressed upon its consideration by his hon. friend (Mr. Grenfell), and which, but for his exertions in the cause of the public might have hitherto remained unknown or unnoticed. It could not be denied, from the statements and facts which he had brought forward, that the bank derived enormous profits from acting as the agents of government. For managing the public debt, this corporation was paid 300,000*l.*: the interest of public balances in their hands was equivalent to 5 or 600,000*l.* more. This source of profit was reduced by the interest of the loan which it advanced to government, but still with this deduction there remained 350,000*l.* of clear gain. This sum, added to the 300,000*l.* paid for the management of the national debt, swelled their income to more than 650,000*l.* The great advantage which had resulted from the discussions that had originated with his hon. friend was, that the public had become acquainted, by means of them, with the gains which this opulent corporation derived from acting as bankers for the nation. He (lord F.) was quite ignorant formerly of this circumstance, nor had he yet heard of any justification of it. He saw no reason why the public should not deal with these bankers as private individuals dealt with theirs. A private individual, when he opened an account with the bank, defrayed the charge of managing his business in one of two ways—either by leaving a balance in the hands of his bankers sufficient for his remuneration, or by allowing him a commission for his advances. What was fair in the case of individuals could not be otherwise if carried into the transactions of a corporation of bankers with the public. If the enormous balances which now remained in the hands of the bank were still allowed to be retained by them, they should manage the public debt on more moderate terms. The rate of management had actually been reduced, and there was every reason in favour of a further reduction. It had formerly been 530*l.* per million of debt, and it was now only 300*l.* In the time of sir Robert Walpole the charge of management was fixed at 360*l.* a million, and if that sum was sufficient then, when the debt was so insignificant, how much ought it to be diminished now, when the amount of debt had risen to 900 millions? The bank was always an overmatch for the public, and for chancellors of the exchequer. Even Mr. Pitt was beaten in his negociations by the active prudence of that interested corporation, and allowed them 450*l.* per million for the management of the public funds. When he (lord F.) stated the profits of the bank at 650,000*l.*, he was far from exhibiting all their advantages, or giving any idea of their accumulation of wealth. The governor and directors kept their greatly accumulated treasures a secret even from the body of proprietors. It was conjectured on good grounds that they had not less thon 13 millions of savings, or surplus capital, besides the sum on which they divided interest. The governor and directors had not complied with the law which ordains a half-yearly dividend to be made to the proprietors, and a half-yearly statement of their affairs to be laid before them. When a demand was made by individual proprietors for an account of the savings or surplus, it was refused by the directors, and the majority of proprietors, who could have compelled the production of such a statement, was found by ballot to be against a disclosure. He was of opinion, that the law required such a disclosure, and that the jealousy entertained a century ago on the subject of immoderate and dangerous accumulation, which gave birth to this law, now imperatively called upon its due execution. If there ever was any cause for public apprehension from the excessive accumulation of wealth in the hands of any company or corporate body, that apprehension should now be felt from the immense surplus of the bank of England. He would not speculate on the manner in which it might be dangerous to the constitution, but he did not regard that danger as chimerical. The nation had probably no right to appropriate any of this accumulated treasure, but the legislature might order its division, and prevent its increase. He would state no opinion on the right which the public had to participate in the gains which accrued to the bank from the legislative favour of the restriction act; but he was decidedly convinced that we should take steps to confine within proper bounds the power and influence with which this opulent corporation was invested by the indulgence of the government, and the advantageous bargains it had driven with the public. It had even lately been adorned with one of the attributes of royalty, by being allowed to take the coinage of the country into its hands. He would certainly support his hon. friend's amendment, when brought forward.

Mr. *Peter Moore* said, the question was, whether the balances were the property of the country or not? The affirmative was admitted by the chancellor of the exchequer, by his introducing the present bill. The difficulty, however, appeared to be, how to get at this property of the country, fortified as it was in the hands of the bank by various acts of the legislature. The money had been placed there to meet the expenses of the different departments; as, so much for the ordnance, so much for the navy, so much for the artillery, &c. It was, however, never intended by the legislature that those balances should accumulate. If the balances of public money in the bank, as stated by the chancellor of the exchequer, were deposits for different services, under different acts of parliament, the legislature might make an act to alter this distribution, and to render them a general fund available for general purposes. The present bargain with the bank appeared to him most improvident and unjustifiable; and if the bill sanctioning it passed, without meaning any thing personal, he would not be able to refrain from calling the whole transaction a political bribe. Bank stock had risen enormously, the proprietors had got large dividends, several times they had distributed a great bonus, and their savings after all were accumulated to an immense extent. Those savings, the directors pretended, were to replace the stock which had been lent to government. The country, he insisted, had a right to the use of their own money, and ought not to pay any interest for the loan now advanced. He trusted that the House would throw out the present bill.

Mr. *Manning* entered into a defence of the bank, and a justification of the present arrangements. He spoke at some length in reply to the arguments and statements of the hon. members who accused the bank of deriving exorbitant profits from the transaction of the national business; endeavouring to show that the payment it received for managing the public debt was not too great, and that it afforded at different times accommodations to the government, which were equivalent to the advantage accruing from the deposit of government balances in its hands. He said, that in 1800, when the charter of the bank was renewed, the subject of the profits which it derived from the management of the public money had been fully discussed, and the fair amount sanctioned by acts of parliament. He saw no ground for the assertion of the hon. gentleman, that the bargain made by government was extravagant. He further observed, that allowances made to the bank for transacting the public business, were as low and as moderate as could reasonably be expected. The bank were allowed 450*l.* per million for every million under 300, 340*l.* for every million under 600, and only 300*l.* per million when the sum exceeded 600 millions. This he conceived to be as moderate an allowance as could be made.

Sir *John Newport* observed, that though the sum of sevenpence or eightpence for the management of a hundred pounds appeared small, yet the charge would appear more than sufficient when an aggregate of 900 millions was to be managed. He believed with his right hon. friend near him (Mr. Ponsonby), that the chancellor of the exchequer might have made a better bargain for the public than he had done, if, according to the dictates of his public duty, he had consulted parliament before he contracted any engagement. He was led to entertain this opinion from the improvement observed even in the terms of the present arrangement over those of last year—an improvement which he attributed entirely to the interference of parliament, and the beneficial exertions of his hon. friend (Mr. Grenfell). The bank was an overmatch for the chancellor of the exchequer, unless he took the parliament as his auxiliary. The right hon. baronet next adverted to the statements and reasonings of the hon. director who spoke last, and contended that the renewal of the bank charter was procured by an advance of three millions without interest; because, in consequence of the deception practised upon the public, it was believed that the balances were not nearly so large as they were subsequently found to be. He was convinced that the present bargain was a most injurious transaction for the public, and that it made the nation pay interest for the use of its own money. He would therefore support the amendment of his hon. friend when brought forward.

Mr. *Newman* regretted sincerely, that it was not in his power to congratulate the chancellor of the exchequer on the bargain which he had concluded.

The bill having been read a third time,

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* rose to to move an amendment to the preamble of the bill. The preamble ran thus—"Whereas the bank of England are possessed of divers sums of the public money, arising from balances of several public accounts, and are willing to advance," &c. The amendment which he should move was, that all the words from the words "bank of England," to the words "are willing," be left out.—On the question being put,

Mr. *Grenfell* observed, that this was a most extraordinary amendment, and if he stood alone he would take the sense of the House upon it. He himself had proposed that clause in the bill, and at his suggestion the chancellor of the exchequer was willing to incorporate it in the preamble. The right hon. gentleman had only testified a desire to have the concurrence of the governor of the bank, and requested him (Mr. G.) to consult him upon the subject. He had done so, and received this very oracular and equivocal answer—that the clause cut both ways. The hon. governor concluded by this remark, and he heard nothing more upon the subject. The clause, in consequence of this apparent acquiescence, was inserted in the preamble of the bill by the right hon. gentleman, without scruple or hesitation. The chancellor of the exchequer had since, however, consulted with the authorities of the bank; he had seen his error in acting without their formal concurrence; and he now came forward to move for an erasure of a clause expressive of an important truth, and adopted by him with deliberate conviction. The House, he was sure, would not sanction such conduct, nor lend their support to an amendment that proceeded so manifestly from the undue influence exercised over a minister of the Crown by the bank directors. He implored them not to permit such conduct to pass with their approbation, or to allow the right hon. gentleman so much to lower the dignity of his high office in the face of parliament and of the country.

Mr. *Mellish* stated, that when the hon. gentleman had given him a copy of his intended amendment, he had expressed a strong objection to it. He had taken it home, however, not thinking that the bill would come on that night. Surprised at finding it introduced into the preamble of the bill, he had been informed by the hon. gentleman, that the chancellor of the exchequer had no objection to it, provided he should consult the governor of the bank. By the chancellor of the exchequer, on the other hand, he was assured, that he had understood from the hon. gentleman that the governor of the bank had no objection to the insertion of those words. Mr. Mellish said, he complained of them because they gave an *ex parte* view of the question. He thought it unfair to have these words continued in the preamble. They might be true, but if the truth was to be spoken, the whole truth should be mentioned. If the advantages which the bank derived from the public were to be inserted in the preamble of the bill, it was but fair to insert also the advantages which the public derived from the bank. It would be only deceiving the public to have a partial account.

Mr. *Ponsonby* called upon every member of the House, particularly the independent country gentlemen, who belonged to no party, to observe whether he was not right in his assertion, that the chancellor of the exchequer was not a match for the bank of England. When, after having agreed to the preamble of his own bill, he consulted the governor and directors of the bank of England, and proposed to expunge a part of it at their pleasure, and in compliance with their wishes, must it not be allowed that the governor and directors of the bank of England governed and directed the chancellor of the exchequer, and endeavoured to extend their authority to parliament itself [Hear, hear!]? Was the clause proposed to be expunged, untrue, irrelevant, or improperly expressed? Did it meet with any objection of the right hon. gentleman himself? Had he got new light upon the subject? Could it be now disproved? No! but it displeased the bank directors, and must therefore be expunged! Was not this a glaring proof of the influence which the bank exerted over the chancellor of the exchequer? He hoped the House of Commons would not degrade itself by agreeing to an amendment under such dictation, or allow the clause to be withdrawn to which it referred. How came it that the amendment was never thought of till the third reading? [Here the right hon. gentleman was answered, that the late insertion of the clause made this the first opportunity of proposing the erasure of it.] He would beg the House to advert to this striking demonstration of the undue influence exerted over a minister of the Crown by the bank corporation, and refuse its sanction to an erasure of a clause which expressed nothing but the truth; and by agreeing to which, he again repeated, the House would degrade its dignity, and lessen its respectability in the eyes of the country [Hear, hear!].

Mr. *Mellish* said, that it was but fair to consult the directors on such a point, for unless the bargain was strictly executed on the part of the country, they might not fulfil it.

Mr. *Baring* declared, that he thought the indignant tone assumed by his hon. friends on this occasion to be entirely misapplied. The bill before the House had for its object to carry into effect a specific bargain entered into by two parties. He could see nothing improper in the chancellor of the exchequer consulting the governor of the bank, who was one of those parties, upon the propriety of introducing the words in question into the preamble of the bill. A string of resolutions had been submitted by the hon. gentleman (Mr. Grenfell) on the one side, and another set by the governor of the bank. The intention of these words was, to insert in the bill the substance of the opinions entertained by the hon. member, who, in his extreme zeal on this subject, had made so exaggerated a statement of the accounts between the public and the bank: but if the advantages derived by the bank were to be recited in the preamble of this bill, it was but fair that the services of the bank to the public should also be recorded in the same manner. He certainly thought there was a great disposition to magnify the profits made by the bank; and the noble lord under the gallery had ascribed to them no less an attribute than that of coining—a privilege which, he bebelieved, was not much desired by the governor of the bank; though it must be admitted that his figure would make a very handsome impression [A laugh].

Mr. *Rose* observed, that he always thought long preambles to bills very bad things. But still, he conceived, that if the statement of one side of the question as between the bank and the public should be inserted, the other should also be included. He supported the amendment.

Mr. *Tierney* said, it was evident, that if it were not necessary that the bargain entered into by the right hon. gentleman should receive the sanction of parliament, the House would have had no security for knowing any thing about the matter. He spoke, not from private friendship, but from a sincere conviction, when he declared that he had never heard a more triumphant statement than that made by his hon. friend upon this subject. All that was now proposed, however, was to insert in the preamble of this bill, which was to give the force of law to the late contract for a loan to be advanced by the bank, a record of the fact as to the public balances now remaining in their hands. But no, said the hon. governor, no mention must be made of such a circumstance; we, the bank proprietors, must go down to posterity with the credit of having served the public gratuitously. The question upon the bill itself was one of interest. A loan of six millions was to be advanced by an agreement made between the chancellor of the exchequer and the bank, at a time when parliament was not sitting, at the rate of four per cent. Well, then, some gentlemen thought this money should have been advanced without interest at all, and others at a much lower rate of interest, considering the great profits arising to the bank from the use of the public balances, for retaining which they had made an express stipulation in this very bargain: but what said the directors of the bank to every idea of parliament using its discretion in revising the terms of this contract? Why, that if any alteration should be attempted, the bargain was entirely at an end. This was the answer of those persons who called themselves such steady friends and supporters of public credit; at a moment, too, when, the chancellor of the exchequer having failed to carry the property tax, they knew him to be entirely at their mercy. He was perfectly willing to acquiesce in what had been said of the fairness of stating the services rendered to, as well as the advantages from, the public by the bank; and although it might swell the preamble to an inconvenient length, he would challenge his hon. friend (Mr. Baring) to show that the public had ever received a fair equivalent. To him this objection to the introduction of the words recognising the mere fact of the balances lodged in the bank, did appear most discreditable, and to be nothing more than an unnecessary cavil to prove—as if such a thing required proof—the predominance of the bank over the mind of the chancellor of the exchequer. It became, however, the dignity of that House not to suffer its own legislative proceedings to be altered at the caprice or the menaces of the directors of the bank of England.

Lord *Castlereagh* was of opinion, that the matter in dispute was by no means of that importance which had been attached to it in the course of this discussion. It in fact involved no point either of financial or constitutional interest, but was rather a question of feeling and fair dealing on the part of the representatives of the bank, who held themselves pledged to the proprietors to see the bargain, of which they had approved, strictly carried into effect. He certainly did not think the introduction of the words in question could prejudice the interests of the bank, or place in any kind of jeopardy the terms of the contract which had been concluded. At the same time, it was equally manifest, that the object on the other side was to convey an insinuation that the public interest had suffered by the arrangement, and was therefore so far objectionable, unless it was intended to make the preamble a vehicle of controversy on the subject.

Mr. *F. Douglas* said, that although these words were in themselves of little importance, yet they had gained importance by the manner in which their introduction into the preamble of the bill had been opposed. He thought the dignity of the House must be compromised, if ministers were permitted to withdraw words from a bill at the mere will and dictation of the bank directors.

Mr. *Finlay* conceived, that nothing could be of greater importance than the subject now before them. The country had suffered to an immense amount, from the transactions between government and the bank of England. The right hon. the chancellor of the exchequer had indulged in an illustration of the different effects which would be produced by putting a guinea in the pocket of every man in the country, and putting the whole of the money so divided in the hands of a few. He wished that right hon. gentleman could only again put into the pockets of the people, part of the immense property lost by the failure of country banks, from the erroneous system of circulation in England, arising out of the monopoly of the bank of England—a monopoly for which the public received no adequate advantage. They knew that in Scotland, for nearly one hundred years back, there had been nothing but bank notes in circulation; but then there were no privileged banks in that country; they were all established, from necessity on a good foundation, and the public sustained no loss from them. The same advantages would be derived from banks in this country, were it not for the restrictions on the trade of banking, in consequence of the monopoly of the bank of England. In Scotland, during the present state of agricultural and commercial distress, the practice of the banks was totally different from what it was in this country. There, instead of limiting their discounts, they extended them. The bankers could do so with safety; they were all under the necessity of being possessed of considerable property in the funds and in government securities; and they could always therefore come forward, and lend their money on proper securities. But from the system of banking in England, it was impossible to advance money in this manner. So far from the public deriving any benefit from the restrictions in favour of the bank they had, on the contrary, been deeply injured by them. When he said this, he did not mean to condemn every part of the system of the bank of England, or to say that there was not much of it that he admired; indeed, he admired evey thing about it, but its monopoly—the power which it enjoyed of preventing other companies from doing the same good with itself. He observed some gentlemen impatient—as they had come lately into the House, they could not understand the question—he would tell them, however, that there could not be a more important subject than this; and that it was as much above every other subject in interest to the public, as it seemed to be above their comprehension.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that when he had agreed to the amendment proposed by the hon. gentleman, it was only upon the understanding that it was not disagreeable to the governor of the bank of England.

Mr. *Grenfell* said, he did not understand that the right hon. gentleman had said it was actually necessary the governor of the bank should declare his assent to the amendment; and in the conversation with the governor of the bank himself, he did not understand that gentleman to object to the amendment.

The House divided—

For the Amendment	116
Against it	56
Majority.........	—60

The words were then erased, and the bill passed.

Navy Estimates.] The Chancellor of the Exchequer having moved, that the House do resolve itself into a committee of supply,

Mr. *Forbes*, understanding that the navy estimates were before the committee, wished to make a few observations on a subject to which he had already called the attention of the House. He was afraid that the propositions he meant to make would tend to increase rather than diminish one branch of these estimates. The hon. member thought that those midshipmen who had not been promoted to the rank of lieutenants at the close of the war were very much to be pitied. He wished that something more should be done for them. Here the hon. member proceeded to state the hardships under which they laboured, from the want of half-pay or its total inadequacy; but, from the noise which prevailed in the House, we could not distinctly hear the nature of his statements. He had also to complain of the deductions to which this half-pay, small as it was, was subjected. This might be a matter of little importance to some gentlemen, who appeared to have no inclination to listen to any thing on the subject; but it was of great importance to those meritorious officers, who had, many of them, only 50*l.* or 60*l.* a year to live upon. He thought they should at any rate be placed on the same footing as the officers of the army, who had no such deductions from their half-pay or pensions. One of the deductions to which he now alluded was that appropriated to the widows fund. He understood, also, that where a naval officer was entitled to a pension of 300*l.* a year for wounds in the service, a deduction from it took place, which reduced it to 250*l.*; whereas in the army there was no instance of any similar deduction. The officers of the army received their full pensions. This was so glaring a distinction, that it required only to be stated in order that the justice of the House should remedy it. Another hardship which officers of the navy had to complain of was, that when they lost their baggage by shipwreck, there was no allowance made to them, though in the case of similar losses an allowance was uniformly made to officers of the army. Another hardship was, that they received no allowance for travelling expenses, when ordered to join their respective ships. Another hardship, which fell exclusively on the naval service, was the loss which they often sustained by the exchanges in drawing their pay while on foreign stations. He could vouch, from personal observation, for the great inconvenience which they often sustained in this respect, having seen on different stations in India the exchanges as much as 25 per cent. against them. He had seen naval officers in India who had been seven years without any pay, and the shifts to which they were reduced were of the most distressing nature. He understood, also, that surgeons in the navy were not on a footing with those of the army, their half-pay being a shilling per day less. He could not understand the reason of this difference, as naval surgeons must, at least, be as skilful; and their duty was often more arduous. He had received a letter from several naval officers on the topics to which he now adverted, and which he should wish to read to the House. Here considerable noise and marks of impatience prevailed, upon which the hon. member observed, that those officers who had bled for their country surely deserved that attention which some gentlemen appeared so little inclined to give, who had been enjoying the comforts of home, and all the luxuries of life. Here the hon. member read the letter, which stated in substance, that glorious as were the battles of Trafalgar and Waterloo, the House would better consult the interests of the country by making comfortable those who had fought those battles, than by erecting monuments to what would be best recorded in the page of history. He understood that the expenses of the proposed monuments in commemoration of these two victories would amount to half a million of money; but he thought it would be much better bestowed in making additions to the half-pay and pensions of officers. What he wished on the present occasion, when the navy estimates were under consideration, was, that officers of the navy might be placed on a footing of equality with those of the army.

Admiral *Hope* said, he would not detain the House at present; but when it went into the committee, he should be perfectly ready to meet the hon. member on the various topics to which he had alluded.

Admiral *Markham* begged to remind his hon. friend that the matters now brought forward were not in the estimates at all. He should therefore have thought that some answer would have been given by a member of the admiralty to the well-founded complaints now made. If the officers of the navy were not in an oppressed situation, which he maintained they were, then let the admiralty show it: but, instead of that, not one word of answer had been given to the complaints brought forward by the hon. member. The hardships under which midshipmen laboured had been detailed. Would the admiralty give no consideration to the case of those who were not included in the late promotion? What was the situation, for instance, of a midshipman who had been wounded? He had a pension; but if promoted to a lieutenancy, then he lost that pension [No, no, from the opposite side]. If it was not so, then let the admiralty explain how it was. He anxiously expected from them some reply to the well-founded complaints that had been made.

Admiral *Hope* said, he should be happy to give all the explanation in his power on the various points adverted to; but he thought it would be more regularly and satisfactorily done in the committee.

The House having resolved itself into the committee of supply,

Sir *George Warrender* rose to move the remaining items of the Navy Estimates. The subjects which had been alluded to by an hon. member were felt by the admiralty to be of the greatest importance, and the House would duly appreciate the merits of the body of men who had been mentioned. He should more particularly discuss this subject on a subsequent item. The vote which he should propose was for the expense of the navy office, which would be found to be 1,500*l.* less than was the sum mentioned in the printed papers. This arose from the abolition of the office of deputy comptroller, that officer having died since the estimates were formed, and from merging the offices of registrar and deputy-surveyor in those of the head clerks. He concluded by moving a vote of 82,669*l.* to defray the expenses of the navy office.

Mr. *Warre* wished to know whether any explanation had been given of the fact, that there was an excess of two clerks in the different establishments in the present year above the year 1813?

Mr. *Croker* said, there had been no increase in the establishment since the last year. There was a mistake in the estimates, which stated one clerk more than the real number. As to the number, compared with 1813, it was to be recollected that in the first year of peace, before all the ships came home, and the accounts were settled, the business was rather increased than diminished. When these accounts were settled, many clerks would of course be dismissed.

Mr. *Fremantle* said, that the reduction of the civil departments should keep pace with the reduction of the military force of the navy, but yet there was only a reduction of 23 clerks in all the establishment, and an increase of expense of 19,000*l.* Small was the hope that any diminution of expense would take place, if the salaries of all the clerks were to go on increasing, according to the scale which had been stated. The whole expenditure of the navy in the different years since 1811, was not less than 20 millions; in the present year it was only 9 millions and a half; but in the present year the civil establishments were more expensive than they had been at any former period. He should state the opinions expressed in the reports of the committee on the public expenditure of 1797, of which the Speaker of that House was chairman, as to the sums requisite for the different civil establishments of the navy in that year. It was to be recollected that in that year the expense of the navy was 16 millions—the force 100,000 men. In this year the expense was only 9 millions and a half—

the number of men 33,000. The admiralty office establishment in 1797 amounted to 32,878*l.* Certain fees, however, were then received, but were abolished in 1800, when the expense was raised to 39,991*l.*; it was in this year 58,883*l.* The marine pay-office was (in 1797) 1,780*l.*—now it was 2,340*l.* The pay-office was then 38,070*l.*—now it was 82,669*l.* The navy pay-office in 1797 was 15,524*l.*—now it was 43,864*l.* The victualling-office in 1797 was 38,115*l.*—now it was 49,195*l.* This committee had stated, that the expense of the establishments was sufficient to carry on the service at a time when the naval force of the country was much greater than at present; and it was then thought that in time of peace a still further reduction might be made of 5,000*l.* per annum in the navy board. In all the departments a large increase would be observed. This was a *primâ facie* case, which he defied the secretary of the admiralty, in the elegant phrase of the noble lord (Castlereagh), to knock on the head. The same committee, contemplating the arrival of peace, had expressly considered the present case, and had stated that then probably great reductions might be made, more particularly in the office now brought into view by the resolution of the hon. baronet. He called upon ministers either to reduce their estimates, or to state some reason satisfactory to the country why they persevered in these unnecessary burthens. He would not enter into any question regarding individual clerks, because he felt that the whole estimate was liable to the strongest objections.

Sir *George Warrender* was anxious to follow the hon. gentleman over one or two of his statements, and to correct the errors into which he had fallen. The comparison which he had instituted between the expenses of the year 1797, and those of the year 1816, he held to be unfair. The change which had taken place in the navy since that period, and the unavoidable increase of expenditure which had grown out of the circumstances of the times, ought to be taken into consideration. The hon. gentleman had assumed, that because the number of men in the navy had been reduced, it followed as a matter of course that the business of the civil officers of the admiralty must be diminished. This was by no means the case, and the reverse of this might in many instances be proved to have occurred. He did not hesitate to assert, that the reductions effected on the estimates in the present year, were greater than those which had taken place in 1803 (which had been so often mentioned), as compared with the expenditure of the preceding year. Since that time, immense changes had taken place in the dock-yards, and these, though conducive to the public interest, had necessarily caused great expenses to be incurred. The introduction of machinery for many important operations, and of task work, were to be included among the changes to which he had referred, and these, though they effected a saving of labour, and ultimately of expense, had in the first instance, caused a number of persons to be placed on this establishment as inspectors, and had thus created a very considerable charge. To show that economy had been attended to in the present instance, he would state to the committee what had been done in 1803, and compare it with what had been accomplished in 1816. That comparison, which he was about to bring forward, referred to a proposition which had then been made for a peace establishment, and was not liable to the objection urged in answer to former statements. It could not be said, that the plan which he had mentioned was produced at a period when the peace was thought insecure, and new war was contemplated. At that time the probability was, that the peace would continue, and this was a plan for a peace establishment, which had been brought forward in 1802 (fourteen months after peace was signed), for the service of 1803. Many comments had been made on the comparison instituted between the expenses of the last year of war, and those of the first year of peace, and statements had gone forth to the world, calculated to induce a belief, that the most wanton and lavish expenditure was sanctioned by ministers; that economy was in no instance attended to; and that none of those reductions had been made, which the public had a right to expect would take place on the return of peace. Now, what was the fact, and what was the comparison between the estimates of 1803 and those of the present year? In 1803, instead of a diminution of expense, there was actually an increase of 46,470*l.*; in 1816, instead of an increase, there was a diminution of 8,514*l.* When such assertions were made as had that night been advanced against ministers; when it was asserted they were not careful to make any of those reductions which ought to be accomplished, it was proper that he should prove they had not failed to give satisfactory proofs of their anxiety to effect every possible saving. In order to show this, he would refer the gentlemen opposite to the navy board, which in 1814 had consisted of twelve members, but which now contained but ten. He was not authorized or disposed to claim any extraordinary credit for the noble lord at the head of that board on this account, but in justice to him he ought to mention, that when a vacancy occurred some eighteen months ago, from motives of economy it had not been filled up. With what justice could it be maintained, that no regard was had to economy, when it was thus proved that a commissioner-ship had been vacant so long, and it had not been filled up again. The gentlemen opposite, when they complained of the charges on the present estimates, ought to bear in mind, that a total change had been made in our ship-building system. The whole of the ships wanted for the British navy were now built in the king's yards, instead of being for the most part constructed in merchants yards as formerly. This arrangement, though productive of much benefit to the public, necessarily caused an increased charge on the estimates, as it created an increase of service, and an augmentation of the business of the navy office. Objections had been made to the circumstance of there being three surveyors to the dock-yards. The appointment of the third had been particularly called in question, but this he did not hesitate to assert, had been absolutely necessary, and particularly desirable as a measure of economy. It was of importance that one person should be occupied in surveying the yards, to look to the safety of the stores. One was necessary to make reports on the state of them at various periods to the government, and a third was properly employed in surveying the buildings which might, from time to time, be in progress. The increase, therefore, which had been so much complained of, rightly understood, would be found to have originated in the strictest views of economy. To compare the expense caused at the present day by the salaries of officers (which had necessarily been so much raised in later years) with the charge under the same head in 1797 was certainly unfair. The committee must know, that if that business had not been transferred to the king's yards, which had latterly been carried thither, an increase of expense could not be avoided. If our ship-building were still going on in private yards, from the changes which had taken place, from the diminished value of money and other circumstances, the expenditure could not by possibility have been kept down to what it was in 1797. This then, when the great increase of our establishments was considered, it must be felt was altogether out of the question. The charge for the navy office had naturally increased, while those augmentations were made which appeared under other heads. Those who were there employed, received higher salaries than were formerly paid. If the most able persons were employed to transact the public business (and this he held to be true economy), an adequate remuneration for their labour must be given. At present he would not go further into the subject, but before he sat down, he would again assert, in opposition to what had been advanced on the other side of the House, that a pledge of economy had already been given in the course pursued with respect to the navy board, which having consisted of twelve commissioners, was now reduced to ten, and in which a vacancy that had occurred eighteen months ago had not been filled up, as it might have been, had there not existed an anxious feeling to effect every possible retrenchment.

Sir *J. Beresford* deprecated the idea of reducing the necessary superintendance of the dock yards. For the shipping must be attended to. If those ships which required repair were not repaired this year, they would require still more repair next year, and if neglected, they would in the third year be probably quite unfit for repair at all.

Mr. *J. P. Grant* observed, that when the question respecting the dock yards came under consideration, the remarks of the gallant officer would no doubt experience due attention. But with regard to the increase of salaries which appeared throughout these estimates, he could not, he declared, imagine any just cause for it; such increase at a time when there was on the conclusion of peace an indisputable diminution of duty and a notorious reduction of prices, could only proceed from a decided disposition to prodigality. He congratulated sir George Warrender on the discovery, since the last discussion upon this subject, of an accidental piece of economy of which he was not before aware: he had done wisely now to bring it forward, for instances of the kind were most valuable, as they were most rare. With regard to the great increase in 1803, after the peace, if he (Mr. G.) was not grossly mistaken, it was in the department of the yards, which then had undergone considerable alterations, while the reductions were made in the other civil branches. Not comparing these estimates, however, with that period, he begged to be informed of any adequate motive for augmenting any salaries since 1815; yet the receiver of fees had obtained an addition to the extent of the whole amount of the sum paid to him, and the surveyor of buildings and draughtsmen had been raised from 630*l.* to 1,050. In short, there seemed on the face of the papers an avowed determination to take the utmost that could possibly be obtained from the consenting disposition of parliament. Ministers were acting, not merely on a system of profusion, but almost of insanity, with a studious design of insulting the people of Great Britain, without paying the least attention to their reiterated complaints against the undue weight of all public burthens.

Mr. *Croker* said, he was sorry to be obliged again to intrude himself upon the attention of the committee, especially after the very indulgent hearing with which he had been favoured on a former occasion; but there were some points which had been alluded to in the course of the discussion which seemed to require a further explanation. He should first refer to an observation from the hon. gentleman opposite, who complained that there was no reduction in the civil establishments of the navy. In reply to that objection, he could only repeat what he had stated before, that he would defy the hon. gentleman himself, or any of those who sat around him, to produce a single instance in which there had been any reduction in the civil establishments of the navy during the first year of peace. In 1763, there were precisely the same civil establishments, as during the preceding year of war; in the peace of 1783, in like manner, the civil establishments experienced no reduction from what they were during war; and in 1802 also, the civil establishments were the same as in war. The only difference, in fact, between the estimates now proposed, and those which had been proposed on all former occasions during the first year of peace, was, that in the present estimates there was some decrease of the civil establishments, and in the former there had been none at all. In 1783, for example, there was an increase of the clerks beyond what had been kept up in war, the number being augmented from thirty-two to thirty-seven. It might be asked, was there any necessity for that augmentation? No doubt there was; and he did not mean to cast any blame upon the admiralty of that day for making such increase, because there was generally so much additional labour created by the very cessation of war, that a greater number of clerks became absolutely necessary. But, it had been asked by the hon. gentleman, why the salaries of the clerks were increased? He presumed that hon. gentleman was not in the House on a former evening, when he had occasion to discuss that branch of the argument; and he certainly did not mean to go again through all the statements into which he then entered. He would simply observe, however, for the satisfaction of the hon. gentleman, that the naval administration was induced to attend to the prayers of that most meritorious and deserving class of individuals, from the perfect and satisfactory proof which was afforded of their being in a state of the most abject poverty. He would put it to the House, therefore, upon the principle, not only of common justice and humanity, but of good policy and even economy, whether they ought to suffer men who had laboured hard in the public service, who were entrusted with accounts of great magnitude and importance, who were entrusted also with the management of money, and who were subject to a considerable degree of responsibility—he would put it to the House, whether such men ought to remain in a condition, in which they could not maintain themselves respectably, and in which even their integrity could hardly be considered beyond temptation? But, in point of fact, it would appear that the increase of their salaries did not create so great an additional burthen as was imagined. The salaries attached to those offices during the last year, amounted to 78,200*l.* (he took the amount in round numbers, without attending to any fractional parts); the amount of them for the present year was 85,000*l.*, being an increase only of about 6,800*l.* and that increase was spread over a number of individuals not fewer in number than two hundred. But the truth was, that the increase was rather nominal than real if considered in its whole extent, and it could not fairly be considered as an increase commencing with the present year; for he had to acquaint the House that it had always been the custom of the navy office for instance to pay out of the contingents of the service, a certain sum for extra clerks, and to clerks for extra labour. Those sums amounted in the whole to 4,500*l.* Thus leaving a real increase of only 2,300*l.* He would pledge himself to prove that that was the only real increase of their salaries. With respect to the motives which induced the government to grant an augmentation, he was astonished at the imputations which had been cast upon them by some hon. gentlemen on the opposite side. Political considerations must surely have been wholly out of the question; and as to patronage, or influence, he should be glad to know what advantage could be anticipated from allowing a reasonable remuneration to persons whose services entitled them to it. He was quite satisfied that the House, when it knew that this most meritorious and useful class of servants had been for many years reduced to a state of the most abject misery, would not think the increase of their salaries was dictated by any very violent spirit of extravagance.

Mr. *Tierney* adverted to the statement of the hon. secretary on a former night; and now repeated, that the civil expenditure of the first year of peace was always equal to that of the last year of war. This might or might not be true of former years; but it did not alter what he (Mr. Tierney) had incontrovertibly shown, that comparing the estimates now brought forward for the first year of peace with those voted for the last year of positive war, 1814, there was an actual increase of 20,000*l.* It could not, however, be denied that, even as applied to former years, the assertion of the hon. secretary was not correct with respect to particular departments; for in 1749, compared with 1748, there was a decrease from 41,000*l.* to 37,000*l.* As to the peace of Amiens, he never had and never would examine it; but he referred to the noble lord opposite (Castlereagh), then in office, to state whether in the sort of jeopardy in which the nation was then placed—when, between the signature and the ratification of peace, a French fleet had been sent out to the West Indies—it was fit to make it a point of comparison [Hear!]. In truth, the hon. secretary to the admiralty had established nothing material to the real question, why the estimates of the present exceeded those of the last year by 20,000*l.*; but if, indeed, he imagined that he had gained any sort of victory, in proving that the people ought to bear all the burthens of war, in a time of profound peace, he was not at all anxious to deprive him of the triumph. He was aware that, let him say what he would, he could effect nothing; and, for this reason, he would not enter into the details: but it was a great and striking fact, that whereas in 1804 the charge for the civil establishment was 81,000*l.*, in 1816 it was increased to the enormous sum of 230,000*l.*; and he apprehended that the country would not be satisfied without a strict inquiry into the causes of the prodigious difference. The hon. baronet had spoken of machinery occasioning fresh expenses, when, in truth, it had been put up merely from economical motives; and, if it defeated its own purpose, an additional ground was laid for examination. On the face of the papers it appeared, that, since 1800, the clerks of the admiralty had been raised from 18 to 28, without any reason assigned; and if he (Mr. T.) wished to take the sense of the committee upon the question, there was no mode of doing so now, as the resolution merely referred to an amount of money. Why did ministers refuse all inquiry, if they really meant to save the public money? It was his firm and conscientious conviction, that if the whole matter were probed to the bottom, very large sums might be saved that were now completely thrown away; and that he did not so assert without some foundation, was obvious from the conduct of ministers themselves. The ordnance estimates had been first laid upon the table, framed according to the extravagant plan of those now moved for the navy; yet, when the noble lord and his friends began to apprehend that they could not carry them without great reduction, they prudently withdrew them; and those gentlemen who before had made out the accounts, as they then said, with the strictest economy, now found, to the great surprise of all, that they could be calculated in a way that would save to the country a sum of about 140,000*l.* Of such use was the lesson which the House had lately given [Hear, hear!]. The navy estimates were not, however, to be reviewed; they were to be persevered in to the last, and by them ministers were once more to stand or fall. He admitted that the navy was the staple service of the country, and that it ought not to be reduced too low; but when he found that such men as lord Spencer and lord St. Vincent had thought a much less sum than was now required sufficient for its maintenance, he was unwilling to give more to lord Melville, especially when comparing lord Melville with himself. Within twelve months there appeared to have been a great and unnecessary advance in the expenditure of the navy. With regard to the unfilled vacancy of which the hon. baronet spoke, was it not a fact that the name of captain Bowen had been inserted in the patent of the commissioners of the navy? [Sir G. Warrender answered in the affirmative across the table.] So that in fact it was only a transference; and eleven commissioners yet remained, when eight were quite adequate to all the duties of peace [Hear, hear!]. The maintenance of this enormous system, at the present moment, was nothing less than a prodigal waste of public money. With what force had we to contend? The French fleets had been annihilated, and the Dutch had ceased to exist; yet, in proportion to the diminished danger was the large amount of money to be paid, that the country might be kept upon its guard. For himself, after due inquiry, he was prepared to vote for the abolition of the offices of two of the commissioners, from a conviction that they were useless; and he challenged any naval man to put his hand upon his heart and assert that, at a period like the present, the services of more than eight could be necessary to occupy houses in Somerset-place. Of what use was commissioner Cunningham at Woolwich? for he had now no duties to discharge, though the expense to the kingdom was not less than 3000*l.* a year, including the maintenance of crews for two boats and a yacht? It was only necessary to state the proposition of government to show how repugnant it was to the good sense of every one: in 1804 the sum required from parliament was 81,000*l.*: in 1814 it rose to 221,000*l.*, and, now peace had been restored, without a chance of interruption, it was still further augmented to 228,000*l.*, and this merely for the civil establishment. No man who voted for such a burthen would easily persuade the people (who had so universally expressed their sentiments) that he had done his duty; and if ministers persisted in forcing it through the House, they would justly forfeit the confidence of the country [Hear, hear!].

Mr. *Croker* said, he was not surprised to hear the right hon. gentleman declare that he was heartily tired of the subject then before the committee. He could very well imagine that he must indeed be tired of it, for with all his acuteness and all his ability, he had most completely failed in every statement and in every argument which he had ventured to bring forward [Hear, hear!]. On a former occasion the right hon. gentleman had narrowed his ground of attack, and confined it to a single charge, or a *primâ facie* case as he had called it; but when, in answer to that attack, figures and irrefragable documents were brought forward, his *primâ facie* case at once tumbled to the ground, and he had not another word to say for himself. He had now, however, altered his plan, and taken up a new line of argument; but he was still just as unlucky as before, and he would venture to affirm that he could, in a few words, show the House that his new ground was quite as untenable as his old one had proved. Do not be led away, said the right hon. gentleman, by any vain delusions; do not imagine that I have been confuted; do not suspect that any thing which I said has been disproved. I never contended that the estimates in the first year of peace were always less than in the last year of war. I never thought of such a comparison: oh no: my argument was, that we should compare the first year of peace with the first year of war, and then see how the case will stand. ["The last year of war," was repeated by several members on the opposition side.] Why continued the hon. member, the case as referred to the first year of peace and last year of war, he had already met by a series of facts, which were unanswerable; but the right hon. gentleman had now taken a different ground, and compared the estimates of 1804 with the estimates of 1816, which was surely taking the first year of war with the first year of peace [Hear, hear!]. However, he did not care which of the two comparisons the right hon. gentleman adopted. He was prepared to show that he was equally wrong in both, and therefore he might have his choice [Here the hon. gentleman sat down, pausing for a reply].

Mr. *Tierney* said, he would give the hon. secretary his own choice, and that would save trouble. He certainly had ventured to state the difference between both periods, between the first year of peace and the last year of war, and between the first year of war and the first year of peace. Having mentioned that, the hon. gentleman might do as he liked.

Mr. *Croker*.—It was certainly very convenient for the right hon. gentleman to put the peace of Amiens wholly out of the question when it suited his purpose, but, if he really wished to make any thing of his argument, he ought also to have set aside every other peace, except that of the year 1748, when, indeed, there was a diminution in one particular department of the naval service to the extent of 4000*l.*; though, at the same time, there was an increase upon the whole of the estimates of no less than 77,000*l.*—He would now, however, advert to the new way which had been selected by the right hon. gentleman. He had compared the first year of war with the first year of peace, and his comparison was most unfortunate for himself. In 1794, the first year of that long and eventful war, from which they had so lately come out with unparalleled glory and triumph, the civil establishments of the navy were 61,000*l.*; the same civil establishments in the first year of peace—["What peace?" was asked by several members of the opposition.] Was it possible, continued the hon. gentleman, that any person could think it necessary to inquire which was the first year of peace of that war which commenced in 1794? [Hear, hear!] If he must answer so needless a question, he would say the peace of Amiens, and leave it to hon. gentlemen opposite to find any other peace if they could. Now, the civil establishment of the navy in that first year of peace, the year 1803, were—what? Would the committee who heard the arguments of the right hon. gentleman, believe it? They were 118,000*l.* making a difference of no less than 57,000*l.* He trusted the committee would not think that he regarded that increase as unjustifiable. He was merely stating the fact, without presuming to inquire into the propriety or impropriety of the measures pursued by that administration; and that fact furnished a complete refutation of another of the right hon. gentleman's *primâ facie* cases. In truth, they were indeed nothing but *primâ facie* cases, for the moment they underwent a second examination they wholly disappeared [Hear, hear!]. In the dock-yards, the expense in the first year of peace was more than double what it was in the first year of war. In the first year of war, it was 25,000*l.*, and in the first year of peace it was 77,000*l.* The same might be said of the out-ports. In the first year of war the expense was 5000*l.*; in the first year of peace it was 8000*l.* In short not to trouble the committee with going through every item, he would state, as the general result, that the whole of the navy estimates in the first year of the war did not exceed 550,000*l.*, while in the first year of the peace it was no less a sum than 1,228,000*l.*! [Hear, hear!]. Now he should be glad to know how the right hon. gentleman, in the face of those facts, could pretend to maintain the proposition, that going to war always increased the civil establishments of the navy, and that the return of peace always diminished them. The truth was, that from the peace of Ryswick up to the peace of Paris, signed last year, there was not a single instance to be found in which the peace did not increase the ordinary estimates, and in which the war did not diminish them. That alternate ebbing and flowing of the expense was as regular and inevitable as the alternate succession of war and peace; and he would venture to say, that if the right hon. gentleman was prepared to argue, that the peace of 1803 was less secure than the present, it would only be so much the worse for his argument. The right hon. gentleman had afterwards entered into a variety of particulars, and among others, he had dwelt with great emphasis upon the circumstance that though two of the commissioners of the navy had been abolished, yet another was put in the place of one of them. Upon that statement being made, great and triumphant applause followed from the other side of the House. But while the right hon. gentleman urged that single fact with so much importance, he totally forgot that the individual so nominated to be one of the commissioners of the navy was also one of five commissioners belonging to another board (he meant the transport board) which was to be wholly and entirely abolished [Hear, hear!]. That circumstance was studiously kept out of sight. The commissioner of the transport board, therefore, who was thus transferred to the navy office, would, in fact, do all the business which had before been done by the five commissioners. It was to be remembered also, that the individual in question being a captain in the navy, he would, at all events, be entitled to his half-pay if he were reduced; so that after all, the only additional expense imposed upon the public by the arrangement was about 300*l.* a year: which sum ought in fairness, to be set against what was saved to the public by the entire abolition of the transport board to which he before belonged.—The right hon. gentleman had gone on from blunder to blunder; and it seemed as if a sort of fatality hung over him which made him every hour afford additional instances of the truth of an observation delivered on a former night by his noble friend (lord Castlereagh), that with all his expertness and sagacity, with all his experience, and with all that knowledge which it might be supposed his former situation would have enabled him to acquire, he really knew nothing at all about the subject of naval affairs [Hear, hear!]. He was at an utter loss how to account for his ignorance, unless, indeed, he could suppose that he was willing to deceive others, though he was not deceived himself. [Hear, hear! from the opposition benches]. The right hon. gentleman asked, why there was no diminution of the commissioners of the navy in London in time of peace? In answer to that question he would state what had been the number of commissioners maintained in London in every former peace. The right hon. gentleman was so angry with the peace of Utrecht, that he would not begin with that. What would he say to the peace of Ryswick? In 1696, which was the last year of the war, there were eleven commissioners of the navy at the board in London. In the first year of peace, there were still eleven commissioners. At the treaty of Utrecht in 1712, when the war was concluded there were also eleven commissioners at the board in London; in 1713, the first year of peace, there were—Oh, monstrous! monstrous!!—twelve commissioners! No doubt, however, the civil affairs of the navy service required additional commissioners at that period. In the year 1748, which ought to be a favourable epoch with the right hon. gentleman, for it was the only solitary period in the whole page of history which at all served his argument, there were ten commissioners; and, in 1749, being the first year of peace, they were reduced to eight, being a reduction of two only; precisely the same number which were now reduced; so, that after all they were no better in 1748 and 1749, than we were [Hear, hear!]. In 1762, the last year of war, there were nine; in 1763, the first year of peace, still nine: in 1783, the last year of war, there were ten; in 1784, the first year of peace, there were still ten; in 1801, the last year of war, there were ten also: in 1802 and 1803, the first years of the peace, there were still ten again: so that throughout every instance, he was driven from all his assertions, and he could make out neither his first nor his second *primâ facie* case. [Hear, hear!].—Really after such a specimen of the right hon. gentleman's talent for accurate investigation, he ought to beg his pardon for having, on a former occasion, imputed to him any knowledge whatever of the subject, though he certainly did think it natural to conclude, that when he held the situation of treasurer to the navy, he might have informed himself with respect to those particular points. He would call upon him, however, to show, with the single exception of the years 1748 and 1749, any one instance where two commissioners of the navy had been put down immediately upon the return of peace. For his own part, he was completely satisfied, that nothing could be worse economy than to diminish the means of checking and controlling the proceedings of the navy service. He hoped that great reductions might take place, perhaps next year.—That was indeed his own conviction, and the whole course of his argument had a reference to such reductions. He began with stating, he should continue to state, and he should end with stating, that whenever the voluminous and complicated accounts of the navy were made up, then, and not till then, very considerable reductions might be looked for [Hear, hear!]. With respect to the three surveyors of the navy, he had great doubts in his own mind whether they could be reduced with safety. As to what had been said concerning the reasons for continuing those surveyors, he should not think it necessary to dwell long upon it. The appointments had no view whatever to political considerations, to party feelings, or to the desire of extending the influence of patronage. The individuals were merely master ship-wrights in the king's yards, and had risen solely by their abilities. They had no other recommendation; they could, in fact, have no other. What object could it possibly be to any administration to court the favour or secure the countenance, of a few master ship-wrights? [Hear, hear!] Above all, what interest could the government feel in taking a master shipwright from a situation which produced him 750*l.* per annum, in Chatham, or Plymouth, or Deptford, to make him a surveyor of the navy at one thousand pounds a year, except for promoting the general interests of the service? [Hear!] But there was one of the surveyors, the junior one, against whom the observations of the hon. gentleman opposite were chiefly directed. Of that individual, he would say, without fear of contradiction, that he had dignified his profession by his science and his success, and that the assiduity he had always displayed, as well as the important services he had rendered the country, were a complete justification not only of the choice that had been made, but would be a justification to that House, if it should vote, as he sincerely hoped it would vote his continuance in his office. It had been asked, what was the use of that third surveyor; he would reply that the use was to be found in the economy of the appointment; and he would inform the House how. At the time he was promoted to his office, the greatest inconvenience and difficulty, as well as loss, were experienced, from the want of a common principle in the rate of charging in his majesty's yards. The difference of accounts was so great, that in one yard the price would be 10*l.* a ton, and in another only six pounds. While the business of ship-building was carried on in that loose and irregular way, the risk of loss to the public was immense. It could not be otherwise, when perhaps they would nominally charge 10*l.* a ton at Plymouth for that which was rated at 6*l.* at Chatham. It became therefore most desirable to have an uniformity in the different accounts, to check them, and to prevent such a serious disparity between the mode of charging of one yard and another. The business of the third surveyor was to visit all the different yards, to put them all upon the same footing, to check any excesses, and generally so to superintend the business of those yards, as to prevent the recurrence of similar irregularities. He would venture to say, that since the appointment of the third surveyor (an appointment which was in no way profitable to him, except in the honour which his eminent talents had deservedly procured), he has, during the last two or three years, saved the country, not thousands alone, nor tens of thousands, but hundreds of thousands [Hear!]. No one, indeed, who had any acquaintance whatever with the naval service, but must know that the superintending eye, the restraining hand, and the bold and determined spirit to keep every thing within its just bounds, to check all abuses, and to control all the different departments, could alone be substantially and beneficially done by the authority of a surveyor. It was in that capacity only, with that rank and station, that any individual would be enabled to produce all those advantages; and he felt that both as to the actual and the prospective economy of the appointment, the office of a third surveyor to the navy would prove one of the cheapest instruments ever put into the hands of government [Hear, hear!].

Sir *John Newport* said, that in spite of the triumphant tone assumed by the hon. secretary, and in spite of the not very decent imputations which he had cast upon his right hon. friend. [Cries of order!]—The right hon. baronet repeated the expression, observing that he alluded to the imputation thrown out by the hon. secretary, that his right hon. friend was not deceived himself, however much he might wish to deceive others, and he would say, that in spite of that not very decent imputation, he had not succeeded in establishing any one point of importance. He had referred to the peace of Amiens, which his right hon. friend had said was concluded with a prospect of war at no distant period. It was within the recollection of the House, that that peace was made under very peculiar circumstances, and therefore furnished no parallel whatever. The navies of Spain, France, and Holland, were by no means contemptible at that time, but the navy of Spain was now no more, the navy of France was now no more, the navy of Holland was now no more. The hon. member had dilated considerably on the merits of one of the surveyors, and he agreed in the ample praise which he had given him; but when he made this statement of the merits of the third surveyor, what was to become of the other two? If he had saved so many hundreds of thousands, why were they to be retained, when they had been so lavish? That point remained unanswered; but the House and the public had a right to know why this unnecessary expense was to be continued. The noble lord opposite had taken great credit for the solidity of the peace, but it appeared, that the only benefit to the country, was a considerable increase in all the offices of government.

Sir *Joseph Yorke* thought if the gentlemen opposite would not believe ministers were properly attentive to economy, after the admirable and convincing speech of his hon. friend (Mr. Croker), "neither would they believe Moses and the Prophets" [A laugh]. An hon. gentleman opposite had said he believed every person connected with the administration of the navy were insane, from the sums which they had thought it right to pay to the surveyors and draftsmen of the dockyards. This was touching on a very nice point, but he would venture to say, that he (Sir J. Yorke) had never been insane in his life, and yet he had had a good deal to do with the advance made on the salaries of the officers who had been mentioned. He denied that in this there had been any deviation from economy, and indeed he might say, that in most instances the Admiralty looked at the two sides of a shilling before they spent it. Nothing could be more inconsistent than the various charges preferred against that board. Sometimes the members of it were represented to be wasteful and extravagant in the extreme, and at others, they were described as being mean and cruel to the last degree. They were censured for not doing more for the captains in the navy; for not augmenting the half-pay of the lieutenants, and for not making a more ample provision for the midshipmen. These statements were boldly made against them, and those with whom they originated went fluently on without reflecting, that if all they thought proper to complain of in these respects were removed, it would be impossible to pay any attention to economy. They did not give themselves time to consider that even the augmentation of the lieutenants' half-pay would throw a great additional charge on the finances of the country. With respect to the appointment of a surveyor of the buildings, he would contend, that such an officer had been much wanted, and that the determination come to on this subject was perfectly consistent with true economy. The individual selected to fill that situation was a gentleman of great talents. His exertions had been most beneficial to the service, and had caused immense savings to the public. It was fit such a person should be liberally remunerated for his labours, and it was much better to pay him well than to treat him so that he would be likely to make his bow and retire. The three draftsmen employed could not with propriety be dispensed with. The science which they professed was no very mean science. It was no easy thing to make the draft of a ship correct in every particular, and it required a considerable period to enable the draftsman to do this in a satisfactory manner. When persons were competent to such a task, would it be wise to let them go away to effect a small saving? Was it not better to pay them liberally, than to leave them in danger of starving, that they might be tempted to carry their professional knowledge to other countries, where it would be more highly valued? Could any gentleman wish that they should be thus compelled to quit their native country to go and engage themselves in the service of its enemies. For whom could it be wished they should draw, if not for England, to sustain the glory of the British navy. The right hon. baronet (sir J. Newport), who was so anxious for a reduction on these estimates, had said, with all his accustomed eloquence, "the navy of France was no more; the navy of Spain was no more; the navy of Holland was no more;" and he apprehended he wished our own navy also no more;—at least this would be the necessary consequence of acting on his plans of economy. An hon. gentleman opposite had inquired, if the lower classes of those persons, with respect to whose salaries, an alteration had recently been made, were in such distress that they could hardly procure food and clothing, why the admiralty had not commenced the increase of salaries by making their incomes greater than they had yet been made? His answer to this question was, that if such a step had been taken, the higher classes would have been dissatisfied. If the lower classes had been raised to any thing like an equality with them, the higher classes would immediately have asked what was to become of them, and claimed some further improvement of their situation. The arrangement which had been made conferred no benefit at all on the higher classes; it was only to the lowest of all and to part of the intermediate class that the measure in question gave any immediate advantage. He thought it impossible for those who knew what had been the distress of the lowest class, to deny that it was the duty of government to do something for them. Their poverty had been extreme. One unfortunate man from among them, had been hanged within the last ten months for forgery [A laugh]. This person, whose name was Bradford, had been in the possession of a salary of only 90*l.* per annum, and had been enabled, from the situation in which he stood, to commit a great forgery on the victualling board. It had been discovered, brought home to him, and the sentence of the law had been carried into execution [A laugh]. He was surprised at the feeling this statement seemed to create on the opposite side of the House. He should have expected it would have been considered a very serious matter by those who had so lately been weeping and mourning over the convicts now in Newgate, on account of their not having yet undergone the sentence of the law [Hear, hear!]. Those who had displayed so much sensibility on this subject, ought to have had some feeling for the family of the unfortunate Bradford, who it must be admitted had been with a wholly inadequate salary exposed to great temptations.—He now came to notice what had been said of the commissioner appointed to the two yards of Deptford and Woolwich. That appointment, he believed he might venture to remind the right hon. gentleman, who had put himself most forward in this war of words, had taken place under that administration of which he was a distinguished member. A commissioner once placed in the situation referred to was found of too much importance to be afterwards put away. It was impossible for an individual to be better employed, than was the commissioner in question, where such a variety of objects called for his attention. Where such vast riches were deposited, every officer who heard him must know, that a vigilant commissioner must render a very important service to the public, and cause a saving greatly exceeding any salary he could receive, by merely walking through the yards occasionally, though he did not find it necessary to speak one word. An awful challenge had been given by one right hon. gentleman who valued himself much upon having established what he believed he had called—but he (sir J. Yorke) was not much of a scholar—a *primâ facie* case. The right hon. gentleman had said in very awful language, which that right hon. member was a good deal in the habit of using, that if any man could lay his hand upon his heart, and say of these estimates, that they could not be reduced as he had contended they might be, he would then give up the whole business. Sir Joseph said, he would answer this challenge. He would lay his hand upon his heart and say a reduction could not be made on the estimates of more than a few thousand pounds in the present year. What might be done in the next he would not venture to prophecy, as he might not continue in this world to witness the result [A laugh]. He, however, if he lived, should differ much from ministers, and feel greatly disappointed, if every attention were not paid to economy [Hear, hear!].

Admiral *Markham* observed, that he concurred in every eulogium which had been passed upon the merits of the third surveyor; no one could say more in his praise than his merits entitled him to. With respect to the draughtsmen, he saw no reason why they should be continued at their present establishment. They were not wanted to the same extent as in time of war. The commissioners of the navy were perfectly different in the times to which the honourable secretary had referred. There was then a lord high admiral, but no navy board: the commissioners of the navy were the very persons who conducted the business of the admiralty. The navy office would have as much to do for the next eighteen months as they had during the war: but with respect to the admiralty board, it ought to be cut down directly. The hon. gentleman concluded by putting some questions relating to the payment of navy prize-money.

Mr. *Croker* rose to express his approbation of the conduct of the second surveyor, as well as the third. He had not noticed this officer individually, because his appointment had not been individually attached. In answer to what the gallant admiral had said of commissioners of the navy doing the duty of the admiralty, he was wholly mistaken—the admiralty was at the period referred to, constituted exactly as it was at present.

Mr. *Gipps* said, the salaries of the admiralty clerks before the late changes were carried into effect, had been on the average 190*l.* per annum to each man. The recent increase made them average 280*l.* This he thought was a higher rate of remuneration than was necessary.

Mr. *Croker* replied, that these admiralty clerks were at a lower average of salary than in any other office under government, and much lower than the clerks of the bank and the East India house.

Mr. *Baring* agreed in the policy of paying an adequate salary to clerks who were employed in confidential and responsible stations. He had always acted upon that principle in his own private concerns; and it was therefore the last object upon which he should be disposed to economise too strictly. At the same time he must observe, that the admiralty clerks were actually paid a higher average salary than was paid either by the bank, by the East India company, or by any private merchant in the city of London. The fact was, however, that what struck every one as a remarkable impropriety was, the point of time now chosen for augmenting those salaries, when, as had been justly observed, there was every reason for reducing instead of increasing them: 600*l.* a year (and that would be found the real average), was worth more now than 800*l.* two years ago. There was one charge in the estimates upon which he was anxious to ask a question. He wished to know why there were three draughtsmen to the surveyor of buildings? What buildings could now be carrying on by the admiralty which could require, first a surveyor of buildings, and three draughtsmen?

Mr. *Croker* said, the draughtsmen were the assistants of the surveyor, and with respect to their continuance in office, he could assure the House there would be some important alterations next year. A reduction had taken place in the first and second classes of clerks, so much so, that that very morning a complaint had been made by three of them at the admiralty board, of the inadequacy of their salary to their labour.

Mr. *Baring* inquired whether the superannuated clerks would be forthcoming, if their services should be required in future?

Mr. *Croker* stated, that in dismissing the superannuated clerks, it was understood that their services would hereafter be called for, should government deem it requisite—this he had done with a view to future economy.

Mr. *Baring* moved, that the further consideration of this question be postponed for a few days, that the admiralty might have time to produce new estimates, which however was negatived. The original question was then carried without a division. The chairman reported progress, and asked leave to sit again. The House adjourned at two o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, April 1.

CHARGES AGAINST LORD ELLENBOROUGH.] Lord *Cochrane* again tendered to the House his fourteenth charge against lord Ellenborough, which he had offered on Friday, but which was then rejected on the ground, that, although the charge purported to be against lord Ellenborough, it yet went to impeach the whole court, and particularly sir Simon Le Blanc. The noble lord now stated that he trusted the charge would be found so worded as to preclude the possibility of its being supposed to implicate the other judges of the King's Bench.—The charge was then read. In referring to the conduct of sir Simon Le Blanc, it stated him as having taken the course he did in consequence of the misrepresentations of lord Ellenborough. On the motion for its being printed,

Mr. *Bathurst* observed, that this paper still involved a charge against sir Simon Le Blanc, of a nature extremely serious, and one to which the House would, on serious deliberation, he was sure, feel very little disposition to give their sanction. The constitution gave the noble lord the power to take the course he had done, with reference to the chief-justice, but the House would surely not give their countenance to a charge against another learned judge, who did not seem to be implicated in the supposed criminality of this case, being printed and circulated for two or three months, without any opportunity being afforded of answering it. If, as the noble lord stated, sir Simon Le Blanc had acted under misrepresentation, then, surely there was no necessity for including his name in the charge, as from the original misrepresentation, if any had taken place, all the evil arose, and he only who had made the misrepresentation became liable. He trusted, at all events, that the noble lord would suffer the charge to lay on the table for a few days, till the House had an opportunity of considering it, before they ordered it to be printed.

Lord *Cochrane* said, it was perfectly impossible for him, however he might desire it, to abstain from introducing the name of Mr. Justice Le Blanc—and for this reason: that learned judge was the person, who, acting under the mistatement of the chief justice, had made the misrepresentations he complained of. He felt no unwillingness whatever to let the charge lie on the table, that those gentlemen, who felt themselves interested in the case, might have a fair opportunity of examining it, and afterwards of deciding whether it should be printed or not. His motive in wishing it to be printed now was, that, as the holidays were near, gentlemen might be enabled to make themselves masters of the entire question. He again assured the House, that though he felt it impossible to state the charge of misrepresentation against the chief justice, without naming Mr. Justice Le Blanc, who had been made the instrument of the misrepresentation, yet he had no intention of making any complaint against that learned judge, who had proceeded on the information he had derived from another individual. It was his intention to bring the question forward very soon; and, that he had not done so before, was owing to the importance of the public business which had engaged the attention of the House, and had probably prevented gentlemen from considering the charges.

The *Speaker.* Will the noble lord agree to let the consideration of this charge stand over till Friday?

Lord *Cochrane* consented, and the additional charge was laid on the table, preparatory to the discussion on the propriety of printing it, which was postponed to Friday.

The *Solicitor General* was anxious that the noble lord should mention the time when the charges he had preferred against the chief justice of the court of King's-bench would be taken into consideration. Did the noble lord mean to bring forward the discussion before the holidays? The articles now before the House, charged the learned judge with partiality, misrepresentation, injustice, and oppression. More serious charges could not be made against any man exercising any official functions in this country. And he submitted, when the charges were connected with a transaction that had occurred very nearly two years ago—when every fact alluded to in those charges must be known to the noble lord during that period—that he was not saying too much, when he contended, that it was incumbent on those who brought forward accusations of so grave a nature, not only affecting the noble lord who had filled the situation of chief justice of England, for twelve years, but affecting the administration of justice itself, to be prepared to have them decided promptly and speedily. Nearly a month had elapsed since the charges were laid on the table of the House, and he had waited from day to day, in anxious expectation that the noble lord would introduce some motion, connected with them. It was a debt of justice that he should do so. Because however innocent the learned judge might feel himself, yet the suspense in which he was kept, by having a series of heavy charges hanging over his head, undecided, must necessarily affect his mind very considerably. It was holding him out to the country as a judge, upon whom serious imputations were thrown—

Lord *Cochrane* rose to order. There was no question before the House, therefore, he presumed the learned gentleman had no right to make a speech. He (lord Cochrane) had carefully abstained from uttering any thing that was likely to precipitate a discussion on this subject. His desire was to have introduced the question long before, but it was not in his power to do so. When he came down to the House last session, to give notice of a motion on the subject, he was forcibly dragged from within the walls. When he was afterwards liberated from confinement, he felt that, had he proceeded immediately, he would have been accused of acting from hasty and passionate motives. He did not, therefore, think it right to bring on the discussion then. If delay had taken place in the present session, his majesty's ministers, who had prorogued parliament to such an unusually late period were to blame. Since the House had met, in consequence of the great variety of public business, no convenient opportunity occurred for introducing a discussion on this question.

The *Solicitor General* knew, that, though there was no question now before the House, yet a question might be raised, by moving to have the charges taken into immediate consideration; but, although he was desirous that the question should be decided as soon as possible, he had no wish to take the management of it out of the hands of the noble lord.

Mr. *Bennet* spoke to order. The

learned gentleman rose to ask a question, which certainly turned out to be a very long one. The noble lord had called him to order—but he had again got up, and proceeded with his speech. This was undoubtedly against the rules of the House [Cries of Chair, chair!].

The *Speaker*. Unless the learned member means to conclude with a motion, he certainly has no right to proceed further.

The *Solicitor General*. I am not prepared, at this moment, to go into the question, so as to submit a motion to the House. My question is, when does the noble lord mean to found any motion on these charges?

Lord *Cochrane*. The charges require the particular consideration of this House, and the public business has been of so much importance, as, I believe, to prevent gentlemen from attending to them. I hope they will, however, during the recess, examine the charges. By this means they will be fully prepared to enter into the question when it comes before the House.

Malt Tax.] Mr. *Lyttelton* rose to ask a question of the chancellor of the exchequer, the importance of which the House must generally feel. The greatest anxiety was felt throughout the country, respecting the decision, still pending, on the subject of the war Malt Tax. He hoped the right hon. gentleman would condescend to inform the House, in what manner he meant to dispense with the tax on malt, so as to prevent the stagnation of trade? What drawback did he mean to allow, in order to encourage the brewers to proceed? If he had come to a decision on this point, he should be glad to hear it.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* was not aware that he could state any additional circumstances beyond what he had laid before the House. A bill was in preparation on the subject, which would shortly be submitted to their consideration. Whatever information he could give, he was very ready to communicate. The malt tax bill, as the House must be aware, would expire on the 5th of July next. Now, in order to prevent the inconveniences which would arise to malt dealers, in consequence of the present stock on hand not being purchased, he thought they would be, in equity, entitled to the repayment of the duties which had been charged to them, for the malt they might have in their possession after the 5th of July. To obviate the mischief which a stagnation of the breweries would occasion, it was intended that the new malt bill should contain a clause, to encourage the brewers to go on with their business at present, under the inspection of public officers; whatever stock remained on hands, after the 5th of July, they were to be allowed a fair drawback for. Provision would be made in the bill, for an arrangement to enable the public brewers to go on, from this time, until the 5th of July next; whatever proportion of the beer, thus brewed, remaining unsold on the 5th of July, would be entitled to a drawback.

Mr. *C. Calvert* did not suppose the right hon. gentleman meant to deceive the House by the statement he had made, but he certainly appeared to have deceived himself. He said, it was his intention to allow to the brewer a certain proportion of the war malt duty, for any stock which might remain on hand, in consequence of his brewing from the time the new malt bill was passed, till the 5th of July. This, of course, was meant to prevent the business of the breweries from stagnating. But how did the right hon. gentleman propose to do this? He said to the brewers, "Go on as fast as you can, and, should any stock remain on hand, I will allow you a portion of the duty—but, if you remain as you are, although you may now have a great stock on hand, I will give you no drawback." This was the fact: and he would leave the right hon. gentleman to judge between the brewer and the public, how the former could proceed in his business, when he knew the price would be greatly depreciated before the 5th of July, if a very large allowance were not made?

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that as to the proportion of the duty to be allowed, that would be a matter of regulation when he proposed the bill to the House. They must, at least, in some degree, be guarded on the subject; and he wished to prevent any individual from being deceived or led astray, by what casually fell from him on the subject. He was sure the question would be entered into with a due degree of liberality, when it was brought regularly forward. As to any allowance to be made for beer already on hand, and which might remain on hand on the 5th of July next, he conceived there was no difficulty in providing for that branch of the subject.

Mr. *Wynn* expressed a hope, that provision would be made, for exempting from taxation, the beer brewed by farmers for the consumption of their labourers during the harvest.

State of Ireland.] Mr. *Peel* observed, that the notice of a motion of the right hon. baronet opposite, which stood for Thursday next, was couched, generally, as a motion respecting the affairs of Ireland. He wished to know, whether the right hon. baronet intended to bring the motion forward on that day, and also what was its specific nature?

Sir *John Newport* said, he would answer the interrogatories of the right hon. gentleman, as far as he could—always, however, reserving to himself the right of making any subsequent alteration, in the period of bringing on, or in the object of his motion, which circumstances might require. He certainly did intend to call the attention of the House, on Thursday next, to the affairs of Ireland. His proposition would be moulded into the form of an address, stating the surprise which the House felt at the alleged necessity of voting 25,000 men to preserve the domestic tranquillity of Ireland, no notice having been taken of the disturbed state of that country in the speech delivered from the throne at the commencement of the session; and secondly, it would call on the ministers of the Crown to lay a detailed statement before the House of the reasons that induced them to call for such an establishment, and the facts on which those reasons were founded. It would likewise call on ministers to point out the mode by which they intended to do away those evils, the temporary existence of which was assigned, originally, for the keeping on foot, for a time, so large a force. This was a general outline of the proposition he meant to submit to the House.

Ship Timber.] Mr. *Forbes* presented a petition from captain W. Layman, which set forth, that the petitioner, after a variety of experiments, had discovered a mode by which forest trees might be rendered fit for immediate use, in ship-building, without waste of timber, or being afterwards liable to the dry rot. This discovery, the petitioner stated, he had laid before the lords of the admiralty, but they had not examined him relative to it. He had afterwards made some experiments before the board of agriculture, which were attended with complete success. Mr. Forbes observed, that the hon. member for Stockbridge (Mr. Barham) was present when those experiments were made. He trusted he would state them to the House, and thus show the very great importance of the discovery that had been made. The prayer of the petition was, That a select committee may be appointed to take into consideration the discovery made by the petitioner.

Admiral *Hope* observed, that an accusation having been made against the lords of the admiralty, for not paying attention to the discovery of the petitioner, he wished to say a few words on that point. The board of admiralty had at least a hundred applications of the same kind, but as none of the plans appeared likely to effect the object, that of preventing the dry rot, they had not been minutely attended to. No person would be more glad than himself to find that an effectual remedy for the dry rot had been devised; but, from the various plans which had been laid before them, and which had failed, the lords of the admiralty thought it unnecessary to enter into an examination of the plan mentioned in the petition.

Mr. *Barham* said, about four years ago the petitioner informed him, he had made a great discovery in prolonging the duration of timber, and adding to its strength. He advised the petitioner to go to the admiralty, and to state his discovery there. This he declined, observing, that he had already made several applications to the admiralty, desiring that the discovery might be examined, but that they appeared to have a pique against him, and received him in such a manner as no gentleman could bear. To this he answered, that, even if the lords of the admiralty had a pique against him, they ought to consider his discovery, without any regard to the person by whom it was introduced. The petitioner then asked what he was to do, and observed that he could fully prove the utility of his discovery. He advised him to get the fact of the usefulness of his discovery verified by some other body, so as to render it impossible for the board of admiralty to deny examining the truth of his statement; and he pointed out the board of agriculture as a very fit body for that purpose. Before that board the petitioner exhibited a number of experiments, at which he was present, and they were all perfectly successful. To the great satisfaction of a very numerous meeting, the art of the petitioner certainly did produce very extraordinary effects. A piece of timber, prepared by the board of agriculture, from the worst part of the oak, was, by the petitioner's process made stouter than the heart of oak. A piece of oak was also cut in two, one part of which was retained by the board, and the other given to the petitioner. By his process, the piece remaining with him was made to carry twice the weight which the other portion would bear. These experiments he had himself seen, and he felt it necessary to mention them to the House.

Mr. *Forbes* trusted the statement of the hon. member would be satisfactory to the House. The gallant admiral had observed, that this was one of the hundred discoveries that had been made for preparing timber, and for curing the dry rot; but that so many had failed, as rendered it unnecessary for the admiralty to consider this. He supposed the gallant admiral was aware of the secret of the petitioner, and had therefore not considered it proper to give his discovery a trial. If that were the case, certainly it was not an unfair proceeding. He hoped, however, that the House would grant the prayer of the petition, and appoint a select committee to inquire into a subject of such great national importance.

The petition was ordered to lie on the table.

NAVY ESTIMATES.] On the motion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the House resolved itself into a committee of the whole House, to consider further of the supply to be granted to his majesty. In the committee, sir George Warrender moved, "That it is the opinion of this committee, that a sum not exceeding 43,864*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.* be granted to his majesty, for defraying the salaries and contingencies of the Navy Pay Office for the year 1816."

Mr. *Bennet* said, he had given notice, on a former night, of his intention to move for a reduction of those salaries, and, in conformity with that notice, he now rose. He conceived that a salary of 4,000*l.* per annum was too much for the treasurer of the navy. The salary of the paymaster of the army was short of 2,000*l.* and he could see no reason why the treasurer of the navy should receive more. It was an office of by no means a laborious description. He was informed, that all the duties connected with it did not occupy the attention of the individual filling the situation for more than one hour in the day. He begged to call the attention of the House to the distressed state of the country. In consequence of that distress, the Prince Regent, his ministers, and that House, had pledged themselves to a course of rigid economy. In consequence of the voice of those who surrounded him, the noble lord (Castlereagh) had been compelled to withdraw the most extravagant estimates that were ever laid before parliament, for the purpose of contracting them; and he hoped that parliament, if it appeared that they were not sufficiently narrowed, would not cease to exert its power until a proper reduction had taken place. He could not conceive why, in a time of peace, the civil departments connected with the army and navy should be paid at a war-rate. A number of clerks and persons whose salaries were trifling had been lopped off. But, if the people asked, "Will you lessen the emoluments of those who receive immense sums from the public?" and the House answered, "No;" then they would conclude, very justly, that there was no sincerity in their professions of economy which had excited so much public expectation. The hon. gentleman then moved, "That the salary of the treasurer of the navy be reduced from 4,000*l.* to 2,000*l.* per annum."

Mr. *Rose* thanked the hon. gentleman for the fair and candid manner in which he had introduced his proposition, and pledged himself to pursue a similar line of conduct. He did not mean to say, that his own labours, or those of any other man, were worth the sum now stated in the navy estimates; but he should be extremely sorry, after the office had been established in the way it was, to let the subject pass by unnoticed. At the time of the Revolution the salary of the treasurer of the navy was 2,000*l.* After that period, the treasurers of the navy made great advantages by the balances of public money in their hands. It was found necessary, however, to withdraw those advantages from them, and 2,000*l.* per annum was added to the salary, by way of compensation making a total of 4,000*l.* a year. This was paid to the different treasurers over and over again, so that there was nothing new which could induce the committee to lower the salary: and he thought there was no very good reason that the salary should be reduced to him, when it had been so long paid to others. He would not say, that the situation might not be filled at a cheaper rate. If it were set up to auction, the salary might be beat down to 50*l.* per annum. But he could conceive no good reason for putting this mark on him, and saying, "You shall not be paid what your predecessors were in the habit of receiving." It was not natural in him to cling to the advantages of office, where any impropriety appeared to be attached to his accepting them. He felt it unpleasant to take up the time of the House with allusions to himself; but when ministers proposed to increase the salary of the secretary of the treasury from 3 to 4,000*l.* a year, he refused the advance: holding a sinecure, as he then did, he thought it not fit to receive the proposed addition; so that he trusted the House would acquit him of any desire to cling to the emoluments of office. The hon. gentleman had said that the duties of the office were easy, and that little time was requisite for the performance of them. He was completely mistaken in this. Those duties engrossed a large portion of his time even when he was absent from London; they employed him many hours in the day, and often two hours before daylight. This might be no reason for the salary being 4,000*l.* a year; but he wished to show that the duties of the office were not so easy. No application had ever been made by officers of the navy that was not attended to. He was persuaded the hon. gentleman acted from no motive but a sense of public duty. It was for the committee to consider whether this duty required them to follow the suggestions of the hon. gentleman; if so, he should submit with resignation to their decision.

Mr. *Bennet* did not know what duties the right hon. gentleman might mix up with those of his office; but men quite as well qualified as the right hon. gentleman to give the information had assured him, that they could not contrive to employ more than an hour a day in the duties of the office. For such duties, the salary he proposed would be quite sufficient. As to the argument from the loss of public balances, that might apply very well to the parties who lost them; but the right hon. gentleman had never enjoyed them. With respect to the right hon. gentleman himself, it was not this office alone that he wished to reduce; he intended to go through the whole of them. He should endeavour to reduce even offices of great public labour: the present was a sinecure, and the first that appeared on the estimate.

Mr. *Rose* contended, that the office was no sinecure, and his deputy, if called on, would state how many hours were daily employed in the duties of it. To be sure, the whole number of hours he had stated might not be occupied in the precise duties of this one department, but they were occupied in public business, and the office was any thing but a sinecure.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* observed, that, according to the rule of the hon. gentleman who moved the amendment, the treasurer of the navy did not hold an office, the emoluments of which ought to be reduced. The hon. gentleman's economical reform was directed against those places which, from late changes, had become more lucrative: but he did not seem to be aware that the office in question was so far from coming within its scope, that instead of becoming more lucrative, it was actually reduced. The balances of the public money held by the treasurer of the navy, when his salary was only 2,000*l.* were a source of incomparably greater income than the addition of 2,000*l.*, making up its present amount. It might appear that this office was extravagantly paid in former times, and he might scarcely gain credence when he stated its emoluments so high as it was known they frequently were. They amounted annually on some occasions to 40,000*l.* or 50,000*l.* The present salary of 4,000*l.* a year, therefore, was a great reduction. But leaving out of view the history of the office in question, the present income that it yielded would not appear too high, when compared with the duties which it imposed, and the responsibility with which it was connected. It was by all means desirable that a situation of such trust should be filled by an individual of high character, of great integrity and respectability. The time and the labour of such an individual required liberal payment; but if, from motives of ill-judged parsimony, the salary was so reduced as to offer only inducements to a lower description of persons to accept it, the public, he was persuaded, would not be gainers, nor would the house have reason to applaud its economy.

Mr. *Preston* urged the necessity of economy and retrenchment in all the offices and departments of government. The price of grain and the produce of land had fallen, and the nation could not afford to pay out of a diminished income increased salaries. High expenses could only be defrayed out of great resources; and to suppose that the impoverished state of the country could yield increased emoluments to public servants, placemen, and pensioners, was little else than insanity. When the farmer could scarcely find a market for his grain, and, when he did sell it, was obliged to take a diminished price —when the landlord either got no rent, or a reduced one—was it to be imagined that they could afford the same nominal sums of money to be squandered on extravagant establishments, or unnecessary offices? Ministers appeared to him to be pursuing a mad career. The hon. gentleman was proceeding with a description of the state of distress to which the country was reduced, and the necessity of alleviating its burthens, when

Capt. *Pellew* rose to order. The question before the committee was concerning the navy estimates; the hon. gentleman, therefore, was travelling into extraneous matter.

Mr. *Preston* contended that, in pressing the necessity of retrenchment, from the consideration of the general distress under which the country was labouring, and applying the result of his reasonings to the individual office which was the object of the present discussion, he was strictly in order. He accordingly proceeded with some further observations on the same subject, which he said he was sorry he had not taken an opportunity of making earlier, and which could never be too frequently repeated.

Mr. *S. B. Morland* said a few words in defence of the salary of the treasurer of the navy, as it at present existed, and against the proposed reduction.

Admiral *Markham* stated, that the clerks in the navy pay office were not so closely employed as some persons might imagine. When a sailor inquired at that office, on the subject of prize-money, he was, after a certain period, referred to Greenwich Hospital.

Mr. *Rose* said, there was such a press of business in that office at the present moment, that two new clerks were called for, although the request had not been complied with. All questions with respect to prize-money were answered in the most correct manner that circumstances would permit.

Admiral *Hope* said, that neither the commissioners of the board of inquiry, nor the committee of revision, had recommended a reduction of the salary of the treasurer of the navy.

Mr. *Preston* said, the whole of the salaries ought to be brought down to a level with the present scale of prices. The inability of the people to pay those that were demanded was the best reason for pursuing the course he recommended.

Sir *M. W. Ridley* objected to the circumstance of the salaries of several of the clerks being raised at this particular moment.

Sir *George Warrender* reminded the hon. baronet that the clerks had received an increase of salary, not on account of the circumstances of the present moment, but according to a rate that was to be permanent, and that brought their emoluments into a correspondence with their periods of service. The number of clerks had been diminished, but it would not have been fair to have disappointed the trust of those who were retained, and who had undergone a laborious and long-continued service on the faith of a system that admitted of a gradual rise.

Mr. *Baring* did not see the necessity of following the rate mentioned by the hon. baronet.

Mr. *Rose* professed himself always inclined to follow plans of retrenchment and economy, when it could be done consistently with the proper performance of the public business. He had saved the places of three clerks; and by the regularity introduced into his office, he had his accounts made up as early as called for. When he last returned from the country, he found an office of 500*l.* a year vacant, and he did not fill it, though it was in his power, because he conceived it to be useless. He had abolished several unnecessary places, but never in the whole course of his official life had he created one. He had lately ordered a list to be made out, by those in the department with which he was connected, of all places that might be spared without any detriment to the public service, and he would proceed upon it when he received it.

Mr. *Barclay* was of opinion, that however proper it might be at other times, and in other circumstances, to vote additions to salaries, the present distresses of the country pointed out the impropriety of proposing such measures now. The sum of 1500*l.* might appear a small saving, if taken from the clerks in a government office, and when compared with the immense expenditure of the country; but it should be recollected, that economy in small matters would produce important results amid the numerous departments of expenditure that existed in a great nation. We must proceed item by item, and save all that we could, if we wished to reduce the public burthens as we ought. The hon. member thought, that though the salary of the treasurer of the navy did not appear extravagant, if considered as the only resource of the individual that held it, and compared with the duties which it imposed, yet that, in consideration of the emoluments of its present possessor, from other sources, and the distresses of the country, it should be reduced to 2,000*l.*

Mr. *Rose* said, that the salaries of the clerks in the office to which he belonged, began as low as could be imagined. This circumstance rendered the hardship of refusing the expected rise from the established scale or rate of increase still more severe. He gave the clerks upon their entrance only 78*l.* a year, and after a service of ten years their emoluments did not exceed 90*l.* annually. They increased at so slow a rate, that the person who had been longest in the office received a salary of only 750*l.* after a service of forty years, though he was considered, in addition to his length of duty, to have incurred such responsibility, that he was obliged to find security for 8,000*l.* He would ask the hon. member for Southwark, if he could employ his clerks at the same rate; or if he could find persons of decent character and requisite education to perform his business for the sums paid to the younger clerks of the navy offices? Livery servants were sometimes paid as highly as the individuals in question, although their qualifications must be considerable, and their situation in society respectable.

Mr. *Baring* was too well convinced that the worst economy was to give a poor remuneration for the discharge of effective duties, to think of enforcing such a principle now; but that was not what was required of the government. The right hon. gentleman had stated that the lowest salary in his department was 78*l.* a year, and that several years elapsed before it became 90*l.* Now, upon examining that division of the estimates, he could see no salary so low as 78*l.* In the treasurer's department of the navy office, the salaries were from 500*l.* down to 140*l.* a year, at the lowest. In the pay office, there were none under 140*l.* In the navy office, the lowest were 90*l.* In fact, among 200 clerks in those departments, he could find none under 90*l.* This was certainly a contradiction of the right hon. gentleman's statement of the reduced scale.

Mr. *Rose* explained, by saying that he alluded to the extra clerks who were in the regular course of promotion. Under this name they generally entered the office.

Mr. *Marryat* did not think the salaries were too considerable. He was certain no man ought to get a smaller salary than that laid down in the present average, for no man could live at a more reduced one. For this reason he would vote for the estimates.

Mr. *Thompson* was of opinion that the clerks were not overpaid, or that any reduction could be made in their salaries without producing distress, or leading to injustice. The treasurer of the navy, being in a different situation, could afford, without positive suffering, to set the example of reduction to the occupants of other affluent places. He gave great credit to the right hon. gentleman for the manner in which he performed his official duties, and the attentive regard he showed to the interests and the feelings of those with whom they brought him in contact. He could not praise too highly the prompt attention that he showed to all applications, the civil manner in which he conveyed his answer, his kind and conciliating interference in behalf of the poor and the distressed, and his ready compliance with their petitions. Several instances of this condescending and friendly disposition had come under his own notice, and he was aware that they were so multiplied as to constitute his general and acknowledged character; but he would suggest to the right hon. gentleman, that he had filled several lucrative offices, that he was now grown old in place, and that, though he had discharged his duties well, he had still in his power to add to his character by a slight sacrifice. It would give great satisfaction to the House—it would do a great deal of good—it would add much to the esteem with which the nation would regard him—if he would now voluntarily rise in his place, and prevent any further discussion on the subject of his salary, by declaring that, from a consideration of the distresses of the country, and in pursuance of the example of the secretaries of the admiralty, he freely consented to reduce his emoluments at least 1,000*l.* a year. No conduct could be more praiseworthy—none could lead to more useful results.

The example that such generosity would set would be followed; and the country would be satisfied that economy had reached the hearts and the offices of ministers. The right hon. gentleman would receive the applauses of his contemporaries, and his name would be handed down to posterity as an instance of ardent patriotism and self-denying virtue [Hear, hear!].

Mr. *Rose* returned thanks to the hon. member for the tribute he had paid his character, and begged at the same time to assure him, that he would feel a disposition to take advantage of his recommendation, had he not on a former occasion, when he held two places, proposed and effected a reduction of 1,000*l.* a year in one of them. His experience on that occasion was, however, too discouraging to induce him to repeat it, for no body then followed his example—[Much laughter]. He was afraid the precedent would be equally inoperative on the present occasion.

Mr. *Babington* bore testimony to the great merits of the treasurer of the navy, who had not confined himself to the sphere of his immediate duties, but had extended his services to the navy prize office, where he had effected regulations that it would be well to see adopted in the same branch of the military service. Indeed his office, in comparison with others, was but poorly remunerated.

Mr. *Long* assured the hon. member who had last spoken, that he was mistaken in supposing that the army prize department was not attended to as it ought, for he himself had introduced several acts for the improvement of that branch of the public service, and had saved at least half a million of money to the nation by those ameliorations. The hon. member might be assured that a great deal had been done in this respect, and he (Mr. Long) would be ready and thankful to receive any further suggestions on this point.

Mr. *Babington* explained, that much, he was sure, had been done in the right hon. gentleman's department—all he meant to convey was, that the army prize money was not placed upon as good a footing as that of the navy.

Mr. *Robinson* observed, that the salary of his right hon. friend was fixed at 4,000*l.* a year, not solely for the labour which was confessedly annexed to it, but for the importance of the particular trust. This salary had been fixed for more than thirty years. Antecedent to that period the office was paid in a variety of ways, and it sometimes, in time of war, produced 40,000*l.* a year. They should recollect the important conditions under which the office was held. Its possessor was a public accountant all his life, until he got his quietus from those who were placed over him as auditors; until he obtained their complete receipts, he dared not make a transfer of one shilling of his real property. So that the individual was not only paid for his labour, but also for his responsibility. As to the difference alluded to between navy and army prize-money, it should be considered that there were many prize agents for the former, and but few for the latter; besides, the army prize was a far more unfrequent occurrence.

Mr. *Preston* strongly recommended the right hon. gentleman opposite to accept the recommendation given him to come forward with a reduction of his salary. He would by so doing erect a monument to his memory, that would out-last the Waterloo trophy. He was the oldest man on the treasury bench, and his example, thus arising out of a deep sense of public duty, could not but be felt by his colleagues. Really he ought to do so at a time, when one-fifth of the population were actually panting for subsistence.

Mr. *Forbes* did not think that the salary having been fixed thirty years ago, materially altered the case.

Mr. *Bankes* said, that although the times were very unfit for the introduction of new or increased salaries, yet, with regard to the old ones, he was extremely unwilling to say that the times were so hard as to require an innovation in the stipends of those established thirty years ago, particularly where no complaints for so long a period had been made, or any inefficiency alleged. He would say nothing of the individual who filled the office, but merely speak of the office itself. In the salaries of thirty years date he would acquiesce, but he hoped the committee would concur with him in thinking that this was a very unfit moment to put any office upon a new footing.

Mr. *Forbes* did not think the salaries of clerks were, on an average, too much.

Mr. *Bennet* reminded the committee, that the question was not, whether the clerks should be reduced from 150*l.* to 130*l.*, but whether the treasurer of the navy should in time of peace have 2,000*l.* instead of 4,000*l.* a year.

Mr. *Marryat* repeated, that he saw no reason for altering a stipend of thirty years duration.

Mr. *Finlay* was of the same opinion.

The House then divided on Mr. Bennet's amendment, "That the salary of the treasurer of the navy should be 2,000*l.* a year, instead of 4,000*l.*: when the numbers were—

For the Amendment	21
Against it	66
Majority	45

The amendment was consequently negatived.

Captain *Pellew* complained of the hardships to which seamen were on foreign stations exposed, by their pay being withheld until their return to a home station. He said, that his brother officers concurred with him in pronouncing this to be a very heavy grievance. Seamen were, by this regulation, often for six, eight, and ten years, without receiving pay, and were, therefore, deprived of the means of purchasing such necessaries as they might want. This necessarily led them to resort to the purser for what were called slops; and they often resorted to these means, not for their immediate want of the things purchased, but to convert them, on any terms, into money for their immediate necessities. He had known a man to sell for half-a-crown, clothes for which he was charged a pound in his accounts. Surely this was a grievance. Another evil arising out of this regulation was, that the men would not enter now for foreign stations. Such a feeling among them, was, of course, detrimental to the public service. One of the reasons for excluding men on foreign stations from receiving their pay, was a very futile one—he alluded to that grounded on the facility of their desertion. Now, the contrary was, in his opinion, the fact; for, so far from preventing, it encouraged desertion, as the men were inclined to run sooner, than continue to bear the hardships to which they were exposed. He knew a man who, when brought to the table to receive fifteen years pay, had only the amount of three years coming to him, the rest having been absorbed in slop accounts on foreign stations, on which the individual had probably a loss of one-eighth or more. Now this could be easily remedied by devoting a couple of clerks, who were unoccupied in the navy pay-office, to the management of pay accounts on foreign stations, suppose at Malta, Gibraltar, the Cape of Good Hope, Jamaica, and Antigua. The establishment could be managed on ship board by the purser, the captain, and his clerk; instead of the men receiving their pay in divisions of six months annually, let it be given them in three months; that is, only one half what they would be entitled to on a home station. He assured the committee that the want of such a regulation was a severe grievance; he would, however, establish the fact beyond the possibility of doubt, as he had done in the recent case of widows pensions, and if it appeared to the House that the navy were an aggrieved service, they would, doubtless redress the evil. He thought he had made out a *primâ facie* case, which neither Moses nor the Prophets could controvert [A laugh]. [The hon. member was here understood to allude to a phrase of sir Joseph Yorke's, on a former night]. Captain Pellew said, he was no party man; the gentlemen who were in the habit of supporting government knew this very well, and that he mostly concurred with them. They would, therefore, he trusted, give him a patient hearing. The proposition for the payment of the service on foreign stations might doubtless receive amendment; but he entreated they would give to it their most serious consideration.

Admiral *Hope* said, that the hon. captain's observations as to the difficulty of procuring men for foreign stations, were not borne out by the fact, for our ships for that service had all been got ready with rapidity. The Indian ships were all gone, so were the Mediterranean, the Brazils, and the St. Helena. The Halifax and West India probably wanted a few hands; but, generally speaking, the whole complement of the foreign service was complete, except a few hundreds, and so far from there being a difficulty to get men for foreign service, he was assured by captains who were actually engaged in fitting out, that the men preferred going abroad to any other station. It was the delight of a sailor to get his money in a heap, and this was the way to gratify that propensity. On the subject of slops, he had never seen any thing like that which the hon. captain had described, and the hon. member, as an officer, must know, that no man could receive more than a certain quantity of slops in a month—how then twelve or thirteen years of his pay could be swallowed up in the manner alluded to, was to him a mystery. He therefore saw no necessity for adopting the suggestion which had been thrown out. For his own part, he never saw an aversion among the men for foreign service. During the last war, when he was going abroad, on joining his ship in the river, he found the deck crowded with persons anxious to be taken aboard. He understood from the port admiral and others, that a similar feeling still prevailed.

Captain *Pellew* accounted for the facility which the admiral said was manifested in fitting out the foreign ships at present, by the eagerness that the admiralty were known to have in getting those ships off. The admiralty sent men down on purpose. Booths were opened at Chatham for foreign stations, but none for home ones. As to the want of men at present, he could, notwithstanding what the hon. admiral had said, state, that the Orontes, capt. Cochrane, for the St. Helena station, was still in want of men: the Leander had been for months fitting up at Woolwich, without being able to get any thing like her number. He had spoken to his superiors and inferiors in the service, and they all concurred in opinion on that point. The hon. admiral had said, that a seaman could only receive a certain portion of slops monthly. He knew this very well; but he also knew, they could draw in that month more than they required for their own use, and that they got them for the purpose of converting them into cash. When he commanded a frigate in India, he found it impossible, from the necessities of the men, in consequence of their not receiving their pay, to prevent them from spending it by anticipation in debts of this kind. The men were obliged to do so, to get soap and other articles of pressing necessity.

Admiral *Hope* said, that the admiralty had certainly appointed a rendezvous for foreign stations, but they had not held out any superior inducement; the men might enter for whatever service they pleased; but his information from Cork, Bristol, Liverpool, &c. where the receiving ships were stationed, did not mention any difficulty in procuring men. There was not half the difficulty on this point, at present, that existed after the American war. The hon. captain was in error when he mentioned the Leander as incomplete. The Orontes, so far from being in want of hands, had only a deficiency of about ten men. There were only three or four in the river in a similar state.

Mr. *Forbes* congratulated the House on the statement of his gallant friend (captain Pellew), whose example he hoped would be followed by the other naval officers in that House. He had himself for more than twenty years witnessed the distresses of seamen in India. The men had repeatedly applied to him for relief, and so had their officers. He had often heard the officers say, that they were obliged to flog men who had gone ashore, and sold every stitch off their backs to raise money. Some men were, to his knowledge, ten years without receiving any pay [Some coughing here took place]. Having but just escaped from a cold he could sympathise with the gentlemen below the bar who appeared to labour under a similar indisposition; he would not, however, be deterred from complaining of the grievances of the navy, and reasserting them, although they were contradicted in that House. They might as well tell him black was white, as that the navy were satisfied with the treatment they received. They neither were, nor had they a right to be satisfied. Relief ought to be given to that meritorious body; and he predicted the time would come when it must be given. In calling the attention of govermennt to this point, he had no personal feeling or interest to gratify, entertaining as good wishes for the army as he did for the navy. The suggestion for foreign payment appeared to him a wise and just measure. The officers (who had the privilege of drawing bills) lost one-fourth by exchange, &c. Some of them had entered his counting-house in India so destitute that their toes were almost through their shoes, and the bills they offered to negociate completely tattered after being carried about until they were nearly worn out; they had offered them at a loss of 20, 25, and sometimes 30 per cent. discount. He had often taken them at the ordinary rate of exchange, until, at length, the frequency of the applications compelled him to desist from the accommodation. His hon. friend opposite (Mr. Alexander), who had been in India a great friend to the navy, and many other gentlemen who heard him, could corroborate the grievance of which he complained. It was right to state those facts. He would always do so, until he found that the grievances of this gallant set of men were properly redressed.

Captain *Waldegrave* bore testimony to the truth of the statements of the gallant captain. He had himself sufficient experience of those facts. In 1805, when he was appointed to a command in India, he knew one man, who, on his arrival at Spithead from a foreign station, had 300*l.* due to him. Was it right that such a balance should be due to any seaman? The information of the hon. admiral must doubtless be the best, relative to the facility of manning vessels for foreign stations, but he had heard quite the reverse on this point; indeed, his information was only from captains, who were themselves trying to fit out, and who said they could only get wasters and artificers.

Admiral *Hope* had his information from no less authority than admirals Duckworth, Malcolm, and others, who were actually on service. This was authority which, he supposed, the hon. capt. would not dispute.

Mr. *Rose* said, that the late lord Melville, to whom the navy were so much indebted, had contemplated the payment of men on foreign stations; but he found so many difficulties to interfere with this intention, that he was obliged to relinquish it. He had, however, effected for the officers the privilege of drawing bills; and the men, while on foreign stations, were also allowed to have a proportion of their pay set apart for the use of their families at home. The hon. capt. talked of sparing two clerks at the pay office (a place in which he probably never set his foot) although not one could in reality be found there—even if they could, it would not answer without corresponding establishments on the several stations abroad.

Captain *Pellew* repeated his former opinions, and expressed his determination on every occasion to introduce this subject; not indeed with a view of either opposing or embarrassing the government, but for the purpose of raising it in the estimation of the public, by impressing upon it the necessity of redressing a heavy evil.

Admiral *Markham* saw no reason why seamen serving on foreign stations should not have their money advanced to them. The late lord Melville rendered a considerable service to the navy, in permitting them to draw part of their pay. This, however, was not so considerable an advantage as was enjoyed by the army, who were paid in full wherever they were, and without any disadvantage arising from the variation of exchange. When he was in the Mediterranean, he knew that lieutenants in the navy drawing for 20*l.* received only 14*l.* or 15*l.* He hoped that the navy would, with respect to this, be put on the same footing with the army.

Mr. *Croker* stated, that he had made inquiries as to the several rates of exchange at which officers on foreign service had cashed their bills, and generally they appeared very favourable to the navy. If, therefore, the suggestion of the hon. member were adopted, it would be attended by a certain loss to the officers. In the years 1810 and 1811, in which the rate of exchange was most unfavourable to this country, it appeared from a return then made out, that in the Mediterranean and in the Tagus the exchange was unfavourable, but that on every other station, the rate was either at par, or in our favour. The committee, however, must be aware, that the facility of cashing bills must frequently depend on the characters of the individual officers who drew them.

Mr. *John Smith* heard the hon. secretary with extreme surprise, when he stated that the exchange had, in the years 1810 and 1811, been favourable to our officers. The fact he knew to be the contrary, and that it was a source of great distress to the service.

Mr. *Croker* observed, that he could not naturally be expected to know with accuracy the rates of exchange, but the statement he had just made to the House was drawn from a paper prepared in the year 1811, and which represented the exchange as favourable in the Leeward islands, Madras, and Bombay; at par, in Malta and Rio Janeiro; but unfavourable at Gibraltar, Halifax, and Antigua.

Mr. *Baring* conceived the hon. secretary to have totally mistaken the facts, for unless officers were enabled to draw differently from merchants, he was very confident that they must have found the rate of exchange considerably against them. In India, indeed, the exchange did not follow the depreciation of our currency so rapidly as in other countries, but that depreciation had generally produced an effect on the rate of exchange from 15 to 25 per cent. In consequence of the nature of our paper currency, the rate of exchange depended wholly on the circumstance of peace or war; so that immediately on a recurrence to hostilities, the main difficulties would again arise. When the country has established a certain pay for the officers and seamen of our navy, it was but proper that they should receive the entire of it.

Mr. *Forbes* observed, that the favourable rate of exchange in India was occasioned by certain financial measures of the India Company, who by a kind of juggle tricked the public creditors out of the facility usually enjoyed for transmitting their property. The hon. member proceeded to explain this point, but the impatience of the House prevented us from collecting it with accuracy.

Mr. *Wynn* remarked, that in the large sum for contingencies there were 1,704*l.* for messengers, watchmen, porters, and fire-lighters in the navy office: messengers appeared to him in the rank of domestics, and he complained that they should receive salaries to the amount of 240*l.* a-year, which exceeded those of the inferior clerks, who were obliged to support the appearance of gentlemen. It had been the opinion of a committee of that House, that 100*l.* a-year would be sufficient for the messengers.

Mr. *Rose* replied, that the messengers did not receive so high a salary as the hon. member imagined.

Mr. *Wynn* remarked, that as the sum was stated in the aggregate, he was unable to ascertain the salary of each individual; but seeing that the messengers in some of the other offices received salaries as high as 240*l.* a-year, he thought it probable that those in the navy office were not less favoured.

Mr. *Rose* assured the hon. member, that no messenger in his office had more than 120*l.* a-year.

Mr. *Croker* remarked, that the head messengers of the admiralty and navy office should not be considered in the character of menials, or mere domestics. They filled offices of considerable responsibility, and had important duties assigned to them.

Mr. *Brougham* expressed a wish to hear some further explanation from the hon. secretary of the admiralty, respecting the rate of exchange during the four or five last years. Was the House to understand that while the exchange was notoriously against this country—while it was become a matter of historic record, and had been frequently stated to the House on the bullion question, as an incontrovertible position—was the House to understand that, notwithstanding that delusion then practised on the House and the public, there were in reality only one or two points of the compass in which the exchange was really unfavourable? He wished to know whether the secretary of the admiralty would persist in such an assertion, and whether he would rest his character for accuracy on that statement?

Mr. *Hammersley* thought it his duty to state, that having been in the Mediterranean during the years 1809 and 1810, he had heard the officers constantly complain of the severity with which the unfavourable rate of exchange pressed on them.

Mr. *Croker* requested the House to remember, that he had distinctly stated, that in the Mediterranean and the Tagus, the rate of exchange had been unfavourable. His information, as he before stated, was drawn from a paper, prepared in 1811, and which he begged leave again to read. The paper stated generally, that the exchange was favourable in Jamaica, the Leeward islands, Madras and Bombay; nearly at par, in Malta and Rio Janeiro; but unfavourable in the Mediterranean, the Tagus, Gibraltar, Halifax and, Antigua.

Mr. *Yorke* observed, that it must be evident to the committee that the facts were only derived from the paper his hon. friend had read, and not from his own knowledge. If the results were not correct, the navy-office was responsible. There was no doubt that the low rate of exchange was felt as a great hardship in the Mediterranean at the period alluded to, because there was then a fleet of 36 sail on that station. In fact, it was the principal station for our fleet at that period. At present, however, the exchanges were favourable, and this mode of receiving their pay could not now amount to a grievance on officers of the navy. When circumstances should again occur calling the attention of the House to the question, it would be proper for the House to consider what course to pursue.

Mr. *Baring* expressed his surprise at the statement which he had heard of the exchange with Malta being at par in 1810. He should beg the hon. secretary to read that part of the paper which gave the exchanges with Malta. This having been done, Mr. Baring said he drew from it the conclusion, that the exchanges with Malta made a difference in the proportion of 54 to 67 to the disadvantage of the officers of the navy; so that there was in fact a loss to them of 20 per cent. on their pay. It was quite evident that the official persons about the admiralty knew nothing at all of the nature of foreign exchanges.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* wished to state the principle on which the difference in the mode of paying officers of the navy was founded. Formerly it had been the constant practice to pay the navy only at home. It was only of late years that the officers were authorized to draw their pay while on foreign stations, and they did so at their own risk of loss, if the exchange was unfavourable, while they gained if it was favourable. On the other hand, in the case of the army, if the exchanges were favourable, the public derived the advantage, and not the officer. There was no intention of undue preference to the army; but the whole had merely arisen from the different modes of payment that had long subsisted.

Mr. *Baring* remarked, that the hardship arose from an ever-varying currency. If the same tricks continued to be played with it, there could be no security to the officer against the greatest injustice.

Mr. *Croker* said, that as soon as the Speaker took the chair, he would move for a return of the rates of exchange at which officers drew bills on foreign service, for the last five or six years, that the House might not be compelled to take the assertion of gentlemen on either side.

Mr. *Lyttelton* bore testimony that the rate of exchange had occasioned great loss to the officers of the navy, and had been felt as a hardship by them. He had himself been on stations in the Mediterranean, where the loss was 25 per cent. About a year after the time referred to by the hon. secretary, a motion had been made on the subject by capt. Bennet, who was not now a member of the House, and the same defence was set up for the practice which was now made. Captain Bennet had been then authorized by the officers of the navy to say, that they were very willing to give up any advantage which might arise from the state of the exchange at any future time, and receive their pay at par. The antiquity of the practice did not alleviate the grievance.

Mr. *J. P. Grant* said, he was glad the hon. secretary intended to move for the papers, for if they proved the correctness of his statement as to the difference of the exchange at Malta and Gibraltar, they would indeed surprise all speculators on political economy.

Mr. *Barham* said, that from his connexion with the island of Antigua, he had opportunities of knowing that the exchange had been unfavourable to that island, to the amount of from 8 to 15 per cent. for the last eight or ten years. He acquitted the hon. secretary of any intention to mislead the House; but he had been surprised to hear such a statement as had been made.

Sir *J. Beresford* said, that while in the West-Indies he was in the habit of having his bills favourably received. He acknowledged, however, it was not of late years. He was sorry that the question of paying seamen while on foreign stations had been brought forward, since it tended to excite dissatisfaction. He never heard seamen express a wish to be paid abroad; they were better satisfied to enable their wives, mothers, &c. to draw a part of their pay, and to have a sum accumulated for them on their return home. To be paid abroad would make them dissatisfied; they did not call for it. He deprecated the readiness young officers showed, to get up in that House, and make statements about the navy, creating dissentions, without having consulted with those of more experience in such subjects.

Captain *Pellew*, as the allusion to young officers, and creating dissentions were evidently levelled at him, deemed it his duty to repel them. He had nothing in view but the benefit of the service: so far from not having consulted with officers of more experience than himself, he had taken the opinions of many, with the exception of the gallant admiral. He never heard any naval officer who entertained a different view from himself on the question.

Sir *J. Beresford* thought the gallant captain had forgotten himself. He had spoken to him on the subject, when he (sir J.) asked him whom he had consulted, and he answered, "Upon my honour, nobody." He (sir J.) then told him, that he was proposing to bring a thing into the House, which would receive the censure of it from one end to the other. The advice he had given him was, that the best way to benefit the service, would be to go quietly to the admiralty, and argue the case with them [A laugh].

Captain *Pellew* said, he must totally disclaim many parts of the conversation alluded to. It was not the case that he had said no, when asked if he had taken the opinion of other officers. He had said that he had not applied to the admiralty; but as to his having not consulted naval officers, he had never said any thing of the kind.

Admiral *Markham* was surprised at the

hon. admiral's doctrine, that a member of parliament might not bring forward any motion he thought proper, without consulting a public office upon it. He also censured the opinion, that young officers ought not to bring these things forward; though he was not inclined to enter as warmly as the gallant captain had done into the subject of pay. He was not a young officer himself, having been 42 years in the service; but he did consider the remarks of young officers to be sometimes very unwise.—[The gallant admiral was proceeding when loud cries of order arose, and appeals were made to the chair.]

Mr. *Stuart Wortley* thought, that no possible reason had been assigned why the navy should not be paid at par as well as the army.

General *Fergusson* said, that however much the nation owed to the army, it owed still more to the navy. To say that the navy would gain at times by the state of the exchange was nugatory, for the only time when the exchange was in favour of England was in time of peace.

Lord *Castlereagh* did not mean to say, that the officers of the navy should not be put on the same footing with those of the army. There had been this difference, however, between the two branches—that the army, or any part of it, while on service abroad, had a paymaster of their own, who stood in the place of government. It would be attended with considerable embarrassment to have a similar officer with every squadron.

Mr. *Finlay* said, the statement which had been read by the hon. secretary was such as no member would have ventured to make, excepting that hon. gentleman —it was so flagrantly in contradiction to all the facts which had been mentioned in the discussions of late years. The exchange had of late been 1, 2, or 3 per cent. in favour of this country, but it had been at other times 25 per cent. against it.

The question was then put on the original resolution, for the sum of 43,864*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.* for defraying the salaries and contingencies of the navy pay office, for 1816.

Mr. *Martin* hoped the committee would abstain from voting the whole of this sum, till the papers specifying the contingencies were laid before the House. He should therefore move as an amendment, that the grant be 7000*l.* less than the sum stated, being the amount of the contingencies. On this the committee divided, when there were,

For the Amendment	57
Against it	153
Majority	—96

The resolution was then agreed to.

On the motion, that 49,195*l.* 3*s.* 4*d.* be granted for the expenses of the victualling office,

Mr. *Baring* objected to the charge of 400*l.* annually for the registrar of public securities. He thought that duty might be discharged by the solicitor, as at the admiralty, or by one of the clerks, as at the navy board.

Mr. *Rose* explained the nature of the office of registrar, who was appointed to inquire into the validity of the securities given by persons to the victualling board. The duties there were much more extensive than in any other of the public departments; and he could venture to assert, that the registrar would not have to investigate less than from 4 to 500 securities annually.

Mr. *Baring* would venture to assert, on the other hand, that instead of 400, he would not have to investigate more than 40 new securities each year.

Mr. *Croker* impressed upon the committee the necessity of this office in a department like the victualling office, to which every purser of a ship gave two securities.

Sir *J. Newport* hoped, if the appointment were confirmed, that it would be effectual for its object, and that no cases like that of the receiver general would occur in future. He begged to know whether, in the contracts recently made with the public boards, the clause required by act of parliament, that the person taking them should not be a member of the House of Commons, had been inserted? A short time since several members had escaped the penalty, on a discovery in chancery, in consequence of the lucky omission of that condition.

Mr. *Croker* hoped with the right hon. baronet, that the securities were taken better care of than they had been in the instance to which he had referred. With respect to the contracts, he did not know whether they had contained the clause enjoined by the act or not, as this did not come within his department. He would endeavour to inform himself on the subject, and let the right hon. baronet know the result of his inquiry.

The resolution was then agreed to. On the resolution, that 33,061*l.* 7*s.* be granted for Woolwich yard, Mr. *Tierney* referred to the objections he had made on a former night to the continuance of the office of the commissioner at Woolwich in time of peace, at an expense of not less than 3,000*l.* annually.

Sir *G. Warrender* thought that the right hon. gentleman had overstated the expense of the commissioner at Woolwich, and had forgotten the period at which he was appointed: it took place in July 1806, when the right hon. gentleman was himself in office with his friends; and if the duties he had then to perform required the nomination of this commissioner, his assistance was doubly necessary at this moment, when our shipping were undergoing repair. In fact, his presence at the yards of Deptford and Woolwich was more necessary during peace than during war: he had not less than 2600 workmen to superintend, besides the care of most valuable stores for the navy. He had good reason to think that the administration of 1806 did not intend the situation of this commissioner to be merely temporary, as a minute was found in the office, for building a house for his permanent accommodation. He conceived, therefore, that he had the authority of the government of 1806 for the continuance of this appointment even in time of peace.

Admiral *Markham* believed that the hon. baronet was mistaken regarding the supposed minute, as he had always understood that the commissionership was only to last during war. Since the creation of that office, another commissioner and a surveyor had been added to those at Somerset-house, who could discharge all the functions of the commissioner at Woolwich.

The resolution was agreed to. On the resolution, that 57,462*l.* 18*s.* 7*d.* be granted for the foreign yards,

Mr. *Wynn* made a remark upon the annually increasing charge upon the public on this head.

Mr. *Baring* said, there was not a single foreign yard in which there was not an increase this year over the last. There was one office which was perfectly useless—he meant the surveyor-general of the woods in Nova Scotia. As for the surveyor in Canada, he was a very intelligent person, and had recently published an extremely interesting work, which was well worthy of perusal. But with respect to the surveyor at Nova Scotia, Mr. Baring said, he had been through all the provinces, and was perfectly convinced that the appointment was altogether unnecessary. The admiralty might just as well have a permanent officer of this sort in every other part of Europe.

Sir *G. Warrender* said, that this officer, in point of fact, did reside in Nova Scotia, and was employed in selecting timber for the navy. There certainly was some addition to last year in the foreign yards, and particularly in Bermuda; but the whole of the persons were advantageously engaged.

The resolution was then agreed to.

On the motion, that the sum of 132,960*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.* be granted for victuals to the officers and ship-keepers in ordinary, as also to officers and men borne on the hulks and small vessels, for the year 1816, at 1*s.* 6*d.* per diem each,

Mr. *Baring* called the attention of the committee particularly to this item, on which a decrease of 40,000*l.* rather than an increase to that amount, might have been expected. This grant was for victualling the officers and men who had the charge of the ships laid up in ordinary. The men thus employed, were maintained in 1813, 1814, and 1815, at an expense of one shilling per diem. When things had become so much cheaper, why was the country to be called upon to pay at the rate of 1*s.* 6*d.* per man. The charge was now 132,960*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.* It ought to have been not more than 90,050*l.* Why was the country to pay the difference between a shilling and eighteen-pence over what it had paid in the last three years. He knew it might easily be said, that the estimates of those years had fallen short, but if this argument were made use of, what should they think of those who had framed those estimates, and not sooner discovered their inaccuracy? In the same manner, the allowance for the men in the service of the customs had been raised by an order dated August 15th, 1815, from one shilling and five pence to one and ten pence. This increased sum had been paid to the contractor for these men who was also their commander. He thought the contractor and the commander ought never to be the same person, and he hoped the House would not give its sanction to such an arrangement, as it gave the commander an interest in the absence of his men, and tended to make him only studious how to get them to take leave of absence.

Mr. *Croker* said, the present was one of the *primâ facie* cases made out by the gentlemen opposite, and like those which had been already brought before the House, would soon be answered. He begged it to be understood, he was content to admit the papers which the hon. gentleman had referred to, respecting the sum paid per man in 1813 and in 1814. Whatever the grant might be which had been voted, whether it was at the rate of 1*s.* 9*d.* or 1*s.* 10*d.* per diem, it made no difference to his argument; his answer to it was this, that the real expense had been greater, that the estimates had been short. For a number of years it was ascertained that they had been so, and the admiralty had thought it their duty, on the present occasion, to put them right, and to bring before the House the sums which the service under consideration actually required. But the hon. gentleman had anticipated this answer: he had said that this might be urged by the admiralty, but if they held this language in defence of their present estimates, what would they say for those of 1814 and 1815? He would tell the hon. gentleman that the error did not originate in those years, but in the year 1806. It was the arrangement then made which had led the present naval administration of the country into the mistake complained of. What had caused the government of that period to which he had referred to fall into it, the hon. gentleman would do well to inquire of his right hon. friends near him; but out of their error, that which had now been so gravely brought forward had certainly grown. In the year 1736, the sum paid for victualling the harbour duty men was at the rate of sixpence per man, and eightpence per day for each "sea-going" man, who, it was assumed, required a greater provision to be made for him than was necessary for those who remained in harbour. In the same year eight-pence farthing was allowed per man for the wear and tear of the service. From 1736 to 1798, a period of 62 years, no addition was made to the allowance for victualling the navy. In all that period on the naval estimates, there appeared no difference in the expense of their maintenance had taken place, though the House was aware a considerable difference must have arisen out of the circumstances of the times. In 1798 Mr. Pitt found the sums granted for the victualling of the seamen insufficient, and determined to correct it. Accordingly (as those gentlemen who were in the House at that period must remember) when the naval estimates of that year were brought forward, an increase on this head was proposed. The allowance was doubled, being raised from eight-pence to one shilling and four-pence halfpenny per man; the latter sum was given for the sea-going men, and one shilling for the harbour-duty men. In 1806, it was found that the arrangement made in 1798 was inadequate. It was then proved that one and four-pence halfpenny did not cover the expense of victualling the seamen; and the minister of that day came down to parliament and proposed a further augmentation of the allowance for that service, and accordingly the remuneration granted for victualling the navy was on that occasion advanced to two shillings and three-halfpence per man. But while this alteration was made, those with whom it originated forgot to increase the victualling money of the harbour-men. The sum voted for them was the same as it had previously been since the year 1798. As fixed in that year there was a fair proportion between the sum allotted for them and that granted for the sea-going men. It was absurd to vote for them the same sum as had been provided in 1798, while so large an increase had been made in favour of the sea-going men in 1806; but this, he doubted not, had been merely an oversight. An addition, therefore, to the vote for victualling them, became absolutely necessary. He accounted for the mistake committed by the admiralty of 1806, not haing been found out by themselves, in this way; while the war continued, the small loss sustained from the victualling of 3,000 men out of 135,000, made it difficult of detection at that time, when they had so few ships laid up in ordinary. It was different now, when the ships laid up in ordinary were so many, and when the number of sea-going men were in proportion so greatly diminished. In consequence of this change, the deficiency in the vote for the harbour duty men, had once struck the officer whose duty it was to look into the subject, and the board of admiralty had thought it right that the House should know of the mistake. With this feeling they had directed new estimates to be made, that the merits of the case might come fairly before the House. In acting thus, they had, in point of fact, done no more than ought to have been done in 1806. He trusted he had satisfactorily shown where the mistake had arisen. He had proved the error to be of long standing as he took its date from 1806, and he thought that the committee would agree with him that the admiralty was bound to correct it when it was discovered, and that they should not be blamed now for doing that which it could be wished had been done ten years ago.

Mr. *Fremantle* thought the explanation of the hon. gentleman satisfactory, but he was of opinion he might have offered it with a better grace a few evenings ago. He thought it would have been desirable to avoid appearing to reserve it for a *coup de main*, to bring it forward with that air of triumph which he had lately so much accustomed himself to assume.

Mr. *Croker* begged to observe, in answer to what had fallen from the hon. gentleman who had just sat down, and he spoke in the perfect recollection of the House, that on the motion for the Speaker's leaving the chair, he had endeavoured to address the House on this subject, but in vain. All he had been able to gain permission to say was this, that in the committee he would give all the information in his power, and he had told the hon. gentleman he had a satisfactory answer for him, which he would give on the first opportunity.

Mr. *Fremantle* observed, that there were others who could have given the explanation, even though the hon. secretary was precluded from speaking a second time.

Mr. *Baring* said, he was willing to admit that the explanation of the hon. secretary was a satisfactory one; but still he thought the manner in which the matter was managed was a slovenly one. He asked a question respecting the mode of our making the government contracts.

Mr. *Croker* said, that no contracts were made other than openly, and by public advertisement. They were made but for one year, and usually concluded at the fall of the year. In 1814, the contract made at Milford Haven was at the rate of twenty pence per man, that of the present year at the rate of fifteen pence halfpenny, and in both instances there had been an open competition. The contracts for the harbour duty men had been made for the month of twenty-eight days. They had been concluded on the following terms in the years specified: in 1808 at 1*s.* 6*d.* and a fraction: in 1809 at 1*s.* 8*d.* and a fraction: in 1810 at 1*s.* 11*d.* and a fraction: in 1811 at 1*s.* 8*d.* and a fraction: in 1812 at 1*s.* 10*d.*: in 1813 at 1*s.* 11*d.*: in 1814 at near 2*s.*: and for the present year had been concluded at 1*s.* 8*d.*, and it was probable that the diminution of expense would in the next year, be still greater. He trusted that the hon. gentleman who had thought it necessary to call the attention of the House to "great sums" would find in the statement he had made, that these had not been neglected. Had not the subject been closely looked into, the error of ten years would not have been detected.

Sir *Joseph York* said, the expense of victualling the harbourmen was not so much reduced as the hon. gentleman had supposed. Though the provisions themselves were cheaper, the casks and other manufactured articles in which they were conveyed (which created a considerable charge) were not reduced in price.

The resolution was agreed to.

The next resolution was for the sum of 1,019,755*l.* for half pay, superannuations, pensions, and allowances granted to officers in the military line of the naval service, their widows and relatives.

Admiral *Markham* observed, that the army were enabled to hold situations for which the navy were not competent. In this point of view, he looked upon the navy as a very oppressed service.

Mr. *Croker* said, the army half-pay oath was nearly the same as that taken by the navy; but, by the appropriation act, the navy officer swears that he has no office, while the army officer swears that he has no office except a staff appointment. An officer on half-pay of the army was *quasi* out of the army, and must afterwards purchase, or by some other means get his rank: he shuts the door on himself, and leaves that service altogether. In the navy, however, the half-pay was only a kind of retaining fee, it was not a retirement; and the officer was called upon to serve his country whenever he was wanted. This had a very different operation, and, consequently, the half-pay in the army and navy were alike only in name.

Captain *Pellew* admitted that much had been done, but it did not follow from thence that government ought not to go further. As to the army not having the advantage of prize money, a new regulation had been adopted, on that subject far from being satisfactory to the navy. In the business at Genoa, the army officer commanding received 7000*l.*, while the commanding naval officer, who was senior to the general, received only 4000*l.*

Mr. *Tierney* observed, that gentlemen not in office had not the same advantages on going into details as gentlemen in office; but it did not therefore follow that they should sit down silent: he showed that a great difference existed between the widows' pensions of officers in the army and those of officers in the navy; and said, that the only remedy was, to put the two services on an equal footing. He did not wish to excite discontent, and he would not therefore concur in saying that the navy was oppressed, but he would say it was not equally favoured with the army. He saw no reason why this should be the case, and he did press it on the House, that the only mode to remove every lurking discontent was to assimilate the two services.

Lord *Palmerston* contended, that the navy were on an equal footing with the army, on the score of half-pay and widows pensions. An officer in the navy could rise to a high rank, and derive from it a permanent half-pay, at a much earlier period in life than an officer in the army; and as to the widows pensions, the widow of the army officer, lost the interest of all the sums that had been laid out in the purchase of commissions. He adduced the instance of a gallant officer, a member of that House (captain Pellew), who had attained the rank of post-captain at a younger age by several years than he could have, according to regulations, attained the corresponding rank in the army, although he purchased every step.

Mr. *Forbes* thought the difference was against the navy, especially in the item of half-pay.

Sir *Joseph York* showed that the half-pay of the navy amounted almost to full pay.

Sir *G. Warrender* begged to repeat the observation he had made on this subject on a former evening, and deprecated the assimilation of the army half-pay to that of the navy, which it resembled in nothing but the name. This was unwise in the advocates for the navy, and would only create discontent without producing any good effects. In the navy, half-pay was allowed according to rank: but in the army, a colonel by brevet, might receive a captain's half-pay. Then the villas in every part of the country attested what fortunes were made in the navy, while no such effects were seen from service in the army. As to the expression which an hon. member had used, that the navy were oppressed, he would only say that lord Melville, last year, promoted 1,126 midshipmen, without friends, to the rank of lieutenants.

Mr. *J. P. Grant* made inquiry concerning the deductions of 2½ and 7⅛ per cent. from navy pensions.

Sir *G. Warrender* said, that the matter would be immediately taken into consideration.

Mr. *Croker* stated, that a case on the subject was now before the law officers of the Crown; it was very lately discovered that these deductions were made from navy pensions, and not from the army: the opinion of the law officers would attach them to both or neither.

Admiral *Markham* explained as to the expression of the navy being oppressed. If grievances existed, the navy was oppressed.

Captain *Pellew* intimated his intention of bringing the subject of those grievances before the House, if something were not done by the admiralty.

Sir *J. Yorke* stated, that the admiralty had been employed on the subject.

Mr. *Forbes* complained of the difficulty which many officers of the first rank had in gaining access to the lords of the admiralty and to the secretaries. He had received many anonymous letters on the subject, and it appeared to him that the admiralty actually carried on a complete system of terror. It was within his knowledge that many officers had attended at the admiralty to return their thanks for the promotion they had obtained, and the answer they received was, that their lordships could not give them an audience.

Mr. *Croker* said, that with regard to the lords of the admiralty, he could not of course give any answer on the point; but as to himself, and the two gentlemen serving as secretaries to the admiralty, he could give a decided, and, he hoped, a satisfactory answer. At the horse-guards, he believed, there was but one day in the week allotted for the purpose of receiving officers; but at the admiralty, on the contrary, officers were seen by himself and the other secretaries every day in the week. He was ready to admit that there were one or two exceptions, when he (Mr. C.) was attending the board; and sometimes when officers sent up their names with a letter, the letter was answered without seeing the officer. A case like this might occur; but otherwise every day in the week officers were admitted.

Mr. *Blachford* was glad that the House was at last informed of the authority on which the hon. gentleman rested his assertions. It was at least fortunate that the House could now have the best proof of the groundlessness of the charge, which he advanced confessedly upon the authority of anonymous letters. He defied the right hon. gentleman to produce a single instance in which a naval officer had been refused admission to a lord of the admiralty.

Mr. *Forbes* accused the hon. gentleman who had just sat down of intentional misrepresentation.

Lord *Binning* called to order: and after a mutual explanation,

Mr. *Rose* animadverted with great severity upon the conduct of Mr. Forbes, in coming forward with stories of grievances which never existed, and which were now discovered to be the fabrications of malignant men. He hoped the hon. gentleman would be more cautious for the future, and wished to put him on his guard against making such statements on the information of anonymous letters. In a short time, he was afraid the hon. gentleman would be a general grievance-monger to all the naval officers.

The Resolution was agreed to. The other Resolutions were then put and carried without any opposition, and at half past two the House adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday, April 2.

Economy — Military Establishments—Property Tax.] The Duke of *Sussex* presented a petition from the inhabitants of the ward of Cripplegate without, in the city of London, praying for economy and retrenchment in all departments of the state, and for the reduction of the large military establishment.

Lord *Holland* said, that he had in his hand two petitions to be presented to their lordships. The one was from the freeholders of the county of Middlesex, assembled in the regular way, praying for every possible degree of retrenchment and economy in the public establishments, and objecting in the most forcible terms to the large military establishment which it was proposed to keep up in time of peace. It was agreed to at a very numerous and respectable meeting, and with only two dissenting voices: the persons dissenting being very respectable individuals certainly; but one of them, while he objected to that part of the petition which related to the income tax, now happily gone by, at the same time expressed his distinct concurrence in that part of it which related to the military establishments. The petitioners, in the strongest language, reprobated the system of keeping up a large military establishment in time of peace, which they considered as a most unnecessary burthen, and dangerous to the country; so that while they objected to the income tax, they also decidedly disapproved of that scheme of policy upon which the argument for so great a public expenditure was founded. One argument used against those who contended that a large military establishment was not dangerous to the country was, that the more general diffusion of knowledge among the mass of the community would prevent any fatal consequences from such establishments. He hoped, however, that ministers would attend to the opinions of the freeholders of the county of Middlesex on that point—a county where light and knowledge was perhaps more generally diffused than in any other. The petitioners said, that they had learned with horror and indignation, that it was the intention of ministers to keep up an immense military establishment in time of peace: that they could not conceive on what ground such a policy could rest, unless it were, that though at peace with the king, we were still at war with the people, of France: they said, that if that sort of policy was persisted in, it would be the means of reducing this country to the same state of slavery as France and Spain; and that they did not see any reason for employing our troops to support any despotism, because they could not perceive that the slavery of any other country was necessary for the freedom of our own. The petition was signed by twelve persons only; and though it could regularly be received only as the petitions of the twelve persons who signed it, yet as it had been almost unanimously agreed to at so numerous and respectable a meeting, it ought to be considered, as it was in fact, the petition of the whole county of Middlesex.—The other petition was from the landed and commercial interests of that large and important county, the county of Norfolk; it was agreed to at a meeting of that county assembled at Norwich. The county was most important on account of its agricultural intelligence, and the city was important on account of its great manufacturing establishments: but, notwithstanding the differences which sometimes took place between the separate interests in that county, they almost all concurred in this petition. The agricultural interest, and those who had been most active in their opposition to the corn bill, were agreed upon the subject of this petition. The meeting was very numerous and respectable, and the petition was adopted with only two or three dissenting voices. There were three points in which all these petitions concurred: first, the general distress of the country: second, the impolicy, and, in every view, most objectional nature of a large military establishment in this period of peace: third, the necessity for every possible degree of retrenchment and economy. This petition was agreed to subsequently to the vote which put an end to the income tax. That triumph, for such it was, of the people of this country, and the manner in which it was obtained—for it was obtained solely by the zealous exercise of the right of petitioning—were circumstances which must afford great consolation to those who felt most deeply for the distresses of the country. The immediate relief which that triumph would give was undoubtedly great: but it was also highly gratifying on this account—that it would compel ministers to pay more attention to economy and retrenchment, and give a check to that appetite for war which was the real cause of the present distresses of the nation. That triumph showed the strength of the people of this country, when they chose to exert it. By their own exertions alone, and the firm and constitutional manner in which they had expressed their opinions, that obnoxious tax had been repealed; and if they petitioned in the same manner against the large military establishment, they would ultimately come to the same conclusion. Let them not be misled by what they might hear, either in this place or any other, from persons connected with those in office, as to the absolute necessity of such a large force in time of peace: for though on one night it should be strenuously argued that an establishment to a particular amount was absolutely necessary, they would afterwards hear the very same persons admit, that an establishment to such an extent was not necessary, and that a considerable reduction might very well be made: and ministers, after dragging their supporters through the mire, by procuring their votes for a certain extent of force, on the ground that it was absolutely necessary, would, when they understood the sense of the country, again call upon them to vote that so large a force was not necessary. True, they would say, we maintained that this was absolutely necessary, and called upon you to vote for us on that ground; but we now find that it is absolutely necessary, for the safety of our places and our power, that you should now vote the contrary. The people, therefore, ought to persist in expressing their sentiments in the strongest and most earnest terms; and if they did so, they would soon see that the ministers would discover that so large a military establishment in time of peace was not at all required. All ideas of the necessity of such a force would suddenly vanish from their imaginations, and the estimates would be reduced. Even at the moment when he was speaking, a reduction in these absolutely necessary estimates had been effected. The voice of the people had reduced them already to the amount, in one instance, of 200,000*l.*, and in another, of 250,000*l.* This perhaps might be thought little, but a great deal more might yet be done. It might be said, that even if they were to reduce as much as they could, it was impossible to make the revenue meet the expenditure, and that the people were only flattered with false hopes of relief. He knew that the revenue could not at present meet the expenditure; but what he contended for was this—that before parliament was called upon to entertain the consideration of any other measure to meet the expenses of the year, and to lay additional burthens on the country which must be felt now or at a future period, the ministers ought to prove that nothing was called for but what was absolutely necessary. He trusted, therefore, the people would persevere in the expression of their opinions on this subject. The people of England, entertaining these sentiments, would not do justice to parliament and to themselves, unless they adopted the most effectual and extensive constitutional means for expressing them.

Lord *Rolle* observed, that the speech of the noble baron tended to irritate the public mind, and that it was not a fair way of viewing the difficulties of our situation. He suggested that those possessed of property should agree to a voluntary subscription, amounting to what they would have paid had the property tax continued, for the purpose of relieving the distresses of the poorer classes of the people. He also thought that a tax for the benefit of the state should be imposed upon those who chose to reside out of the country, and thereby contributed nothing, by their establishments or expenditure to the revenue. There was another topic to which he wished to call the attention of ministers, namely, the country banks, respecting which some regulations ought to be adopted, as a security to the public.

The Marquis of *Lansdowne* said, that this was not the time for discussing the measures which it might be necessary to adopt, in order to meet the expenditure so far as it exceeded the revenue, and therefore he did not mean to say any thing on that point at present; but it was well worthy of the attention of parliament, that all these petitions concurred in the expression of a strong conviction on the part of the people, that further retrenchment was possible, and that it was necessary that a system of the utmost economy should be at last adopted. It was well worthy of attention, that on these points the petition of the county of Middlesex and that from Wiltshire, which he had on a former night presented, were in effect the same: that persons differing in their political sentiments in many points,—and there were some expressions in the Middlesex petition in which he believed the Wiltshire petitioners would not have concurred; but that they one and all agreed in this, that a reduction might and ought to be made in our expenditure. This was infinitely the safest mode of meeting the difficulties of the country, but a mode which did not occur to the noble baron who spoke last when he negatived the address which was proposed not long ago for a revision of the military estimates, which, however, had since been reconsidered and reduced. And when the noble baron called upon others to show how the expenditure could be met without the income tax, he ought to observe that the petitioners objected to that system of policy on which the alleged necessity for so large an expenditure rested. The chief object for which he at present rose was to give notice, that he would on Friday move an address for the production of the amended estimates, to show that a reduction had been made, notwithstanding the vote of their lordships and of the other House, approving of the estimates as they had stood, because it was absolutely necessary that they should be of that amount and extent: but if those who thought and voted, that estimates to that extent were necessary, had since reduced them, or concurred in that reduction, the inference was, that these petitions had given some new light to the government, which had led the ministers to reconsider and amend the estimates, and to see the possibility of that reduction which it would be the object of his motion on Friday to bring before the House. All the remedies might be separately considered, but the most efficacious of them all was economy and retrenchment. This, happily, now appeared to be the opinion of all classes of the community, in all parts of the country. When the utmost possible reduction should be effected, then would be the time to consider what further measures might be necessary to meet the exigencies of the state: but retrenchment ought to be the first, as it was the safest and most efficacious remedy for the present distresses of the country.

Lord *Rolle* with regard to his vote on the motion respecting the military establishments, said, that he had placed confidence in ministers on account of the peace which they had concluded, and in the belief that they would do all that could be done for the country. He had given his vote upon principle, and as independently as any member of that House. He did not care who was minister; he wanted nothing of either party: he looked to economy, and so long as ministers appeared to be really disposed to adopt that course he would support them.

The Earl of *Liverpool* thought it incumbent upon him to say a few words in answer to the noble marquis. It would be in the recollection of the House with regard to the question of the military establishments, that the question between the noble marquis and his majesty's ministers was not as to any saving upon contingent or particular points, but as to the whole amount of force to be employed. Ministers had been all along disposed to introduce the strictest economy into the public expenditure, and when the time came he should enter into the explanation of the reductions in the different items; but as to the amount of the military force it remained, with one exception, which stood on special grounds that he should hereafter explain, precisely the same.

Lord *Redesdale* complained of the misrepresentation of the votes in that House, which had been made by the noble marquis, and said that the noble marquis, and those who associated with him, assumed a tone of independence to which they were not entitled [Cries of Order, order!]. He said this because the independence of votes had been questioned; he felt himself as independent as any noble lord in that House; his fortune might not be so large as that of the noble marquis, but his mind was as independent as that of any lord in the House. He contended that the motion of the noble marquis on a former evening, had no relation to the present reduction in the estimates, because it went to the consideration of the whole of them, and not to particular items. With regard to the property tax, he maintained that a majority of the people were in favour of it—at least a majority of those who paid it; and those who did not pay it would feel, that it would be much better for them to have a tax of that description imposed upon the higher classes than additional taxation upon themselves. He was satisfied that this was the case; and he thought it a most unfortunate thing for the country that the property tax had been rejected.

The Marquis of *Lansdowne*, in answer to the noble and learned lord, observed, that had he doubted the independence of any noble lord in that House, he should have felt it incumbent upon him to make an apology to that noble lord, as well as to the House; but he put it to the candour of their lordships whether he had said any thing that could bear the construction put upon it by the noble and learned lord. As to the statement of the noble and learned lord, that a majority of the people were in favour of the income tax, he contended, that the only constitutional way in which the opinions of the majority of the people could be expressed was, by petitions to parliament; and was not the universal expression of the petitions to that House against that impost? If, then, there was a majority in favour of it, how happened it that they had not contrived to express their sentiments to parliament. With respect to what had been said by the noble earl, he maintained, that it was not merely against the amount of the military force that he had contended, but he had particularly pointed out several items in which a reduction might take place, and more especially the staff of the army, with respect to which a reduction had now been made by ministers in the new estimates, for the production of which he intended to move on Friday.

Lord *Holland*, on moving that both the petitions do lie on the table, observed, that he had been unjustly charged with attempting to irritate the public mind, although he had merely stated with fairness what the petitioners prayed for. As to the irritation of those who had been congratulating the country upon the peace, he could not help it. He suspected they were somewhat in the situation of sir Peter Teazle, in a well known and admirable comedy, who said, that all the comfort and satisfaction of his life were gone before he had finished receiving the congratulations on his marriage. If, by presenting petitions conveying the real sense of the people, he caused any irritation of that description, he could not avoid it. With regard to the majority of the people that were said to be in favour of the income tax, he could not help considering it a majority of the same description as that in favour of the Bourbons in France; and he suspected, that if both majorities were sent where certain individuals had been sent, to Elba or St. Helena, either of these islands would be full large enough to contain them.

The petitions were ordered to lie on the table.

STATE OF IRELAND.] The order of the day being read,

The Marquis of *Buckingham* rose, pursuant to notice, and observed, that the question to which he was about to call the attention of their lordships was one of peculiar difficulty—one which he could not have been urged to undertake by any thing short of an irresistible sense of duty. It was indeed a question of large and extensive character, presenting a field for discussion no less than the whole map of Ireland, including the bad government of ages. If he were to adduce witnesses to prove the necessity of the motion with which he intended to conclude, he should refer to the whole people of Ireland—to the system of government which had been acted upon in that country for centuries—to the condition of all classes of its population—to a higher order impoverished, and a lower order driven to desperation. The facts were indeed, such, that every individual acquainted with the state of

Ireland must bear testimony that the case of that country was truly deplorable, owing to laws passed at different periods, under various administrations, which served to render the system of government radically vicious, incapable of maintaining the natural relations between the governors and the governed, and tending to drive one class of the people to poverty and another to rebellion. The state of Ireland was truly the result of a uniform endeavour to govern that country by division, by which endeavour the government excited the people against itself. This endeavour he did not mean to attribute to any particular administration—it was the system of which Ireland had reason to complain—that system which was placed in the cradle of that country, and which like a serpent had twisted round its limbs, and obstructed the circulation of its heart's blood. To that system he proposed to call their lordships' attention, and perhaps too much time had been already lost. It ought to have been considered heretofore. A state of war might have been deemed unfavourable for such consideration; but what apology could be offered for neglecting it in a state of peace. The time was indeed now come to investigate the subject, and to devise the means of putting an end to the manifold evils which afflicted Ireland. Those who might have objected to this investigation during the existence of war, could not, he thought, consistently oppose it in different circumstances. For if the investigation were resisted at present, he could not imagine a time when it would be proper to enter into it; and if the House desired to collect the means of tranquilizing Ireland—of rendering that country available for the common benefit of the empire—of enabling us to meet the difficulties of any future war, he thought their lordships could not hesitate to accede to his motion. The foundation of Ireland's wrongs consisted, he begged their lordships to remember, in the attempt to divide that country; for it had always been the policy to govern it by a system of disunion. If sacrifices were made, they were only calculated to expose one party to the oppression and insult of another—if burthens were imposed, they only served to bear upon one party, to the unjust exemption of another—if concessions were granted, they had a tendency only to benefit one party to the prejudice of another. In the pursuit, then, of such a system, could it be matter of wonder that the rule of England should be unpopular, and productive of grievances in Ireland? But such effects were the natural operation of the conduct of this country in looking only to a temporary policy, instead of probing the evil to the bottom, and contriving to establish a better and permanent system of government. The conduct which he complained of, he did not, he repeated, mean to attribute to any individual government. There were, he felt, instances of good policy, some exceptions to the system generally practised towards Ireland, but yet these exceptions were too few and too short lived to produce any great practical result. The whole system was now, however, under their lordships' view, and it was open to them to follow the impulse of their duty by fully examining its merits. No resistance could be offered to that examination upon the score of time or circumstance, for the season at which he proposed this inquiry was particularly auspicious; while the necessity of the case was obvious. If ministers thought proper to oppose the inquiry it would be incumbent upon them to state their reasons for such opposition. The situation of Ireland was notoriously wretched in the extreme, and parliament was bound to apply itself with the utmost industry to consider of some practicable remedy. It was not necessary for him to describe the condition of Ireland. Its agriculture ruined, its commerce at a stand, its population discontented, furnished ample materials to swell a speech; but these materials were not unknown to their lordships. Yet the only remedy proposed for such an accumulation of calamities was, to place a strong military force in the country, for the purpose of suppressing the discontent and desperation to which such calamities gave birth. But while this military force was so disposed—while the constitution and the laws were suspended in the very heart of the country, ministers were surely bound to show what circumstances rendered necessary such extraordinary conduct, and whether the evils of Ireland were such as could only be met by force—whether the tranquillity of that country could be restored by any other means—whether a provision against present danger could not be accompanied by some arrangements calculated to remove the evil which gave rise to that danger. Their lordships were imperatively called upon to consider this subject—to hold out some hopes to Ireland, that while it was in a period of peace converted into a large garrison—that while its constitution was suspended, and its tranquillity disturbed—it was not intended to regard that country as an alien and an outcast for ever. That such was not the sentence which that House proposed to pronounce against Ireland, he hoped and trusted, and that he should not be found to appeal to their lordships in vain. His object in the appeal was conciliation, and with this object in view he felt it impossible to consider it without adverting to that which had already so often occupied their lordships' attention. He meant what was called the Catholic question, which was in fact intimately connected with every branch of the state of Ireland. Upon the present occasion, however, he should think it improper to fatigue their lordships by dwelling upon the merits of a question with regard to which they had already heard so much. But yet, to the present state of that question, he must briefly call the attention of the House: and confident he was, that if their lordships went into its consideration with a conciliatory spirit, it would be easy to find a remedy. He would lay down this as a general principle—that whatever was done for the relief of the Catholic, should be done by the legislature alone. Whatever inclination he might have to listen to the statements of every portion of the Catholics, he would not submit his principles to any jurisdiction but that of parliament. His wish was that parliament should proceed directly to its object, without adverting to, or at least without being controlled by the decision of any other tribunal. Indifference to the judgment of any portion of the people would not, he trusted, be imputed to him, nor would it be supposed that he was ever unwilling to treat public opinion with due respect and consideration; but as there were two parties among the Catholics upon the subject of acceding to the securities required for the maintenance of our church establishment, it was the duty of parliament to interfere between them. In proportion, indeed, as those parties were divided, it became the province of parliament to steer a direct course, and to decide without any reference to either. He had no difficulty in stating, that unless such a course were taken, parliament would rather aggravate than allay the disquietude which agitated Ireland. If, indeed, he were asked for a precise explanation of his views, he would state, that by entering coolly and dispassionately into the subject the remedy would be easily found; and while he advised conciliation, he would frankly express his decided conviction, that with the securities alluded to for the Protestant establishment, every concession required by the Catholics might be granted; but without these securities nothing [Hear, hear!]. He would not, while a determined enemy to the exclusive system of the penal laws, allow the Catholics to interfere with the Church, or with the education of Protestant youths; but, on the other hand, he would by all means promote the education of Catholics at home, in order to withdraw them from foreign seminaries, foreign prejudices, and foreign attachments. Upon these grounds he was willing to grant the Catholics every thing they desired. But he would repeat, that every arrangement necessary to the security of the Protestant establishment should accompany these concessions; and, with that view it must be provided, that the Crown should be invested with a due control over the appointment of Catholic bishops. Thus the established church would possess a degree of security, which did not belong to it at present. He would imitate the policy of the Austrian government with respect to Hungary in 1791. The population of that country were almost universally calvinists. Up to the year 1791, all places of profit and power in that kingdom were exclusively in the hands of German catholics. The consequence was, that the blood of that generous people boiled with indignation, which ended in a conspiracy to shake off the Austrian yoke. When, however, the emperor Leopold succeeded to the throne in 1791, he had the wisdom to resort to no half measures, but threw open every situation of profit and power to the calvinists indiscriminately with the catholics. The effect had since been, that the Hungarians had been in more than one instance the saviours of Leopold's crown; and that, when Buonaparté was master of Vienna, and held out to them the hopes of independence, they retained their fidelity. The reverend bench of bishops opposite to him, knew full well that the dangers of the established church were not now to be found in the thunders of the Vatican, or the attacks of catholicism, but in the multiplicity of different sects, whose increasing numbers had free admission to place and power, and who left the church a fair outside, while all within was hollow. Why was it not to be supposed that the generous hearts of the people of Ireland would be influenced to attachment by similar concessions? Unless the legislature began in this way, there was no chance of allaying the irritation of Ireland. All her other grievances, all her sources of disgust and disaffection, were so intimately connected with this, that unless their lordships began with removing it, there was no chance of improvement. But this alone would do little, unless, at the same time, the grievance of tithes was considerably alleviated. By the laws which now governed Ireland, the burthen of tithes was in fact taken off from the landowner, and laid on the potatoe garden of the peasant, and his patches of hemp and flax. It was owing to the ruinous system of internal disunion and division that this course had been pursued. About the year 1720, the tillage of Ireland was at a low ebb—the land was chiefly laid out in pasturage. About the period he had mentioned, the church claimed agistment tithe on the cattle of Ireland, and obtained a decree of the court of exchequer in their favour. What was the consequence? The English settlers, the protestant landowners, raised such a clamour, that the agistment tithe never was levied. The whole burthen was transferred to the catholic and the dissenter, who included almost the whole of the population, and who saw the whole of the tithes levied from them to support a church whose doctrines were not professed by one-fifth of the inhabitants. The consequence was, that the rector saw himself driven to resort for his tithes to the potatoe garden of the poor catholic and dissenter, and to the flax which they raised for their linen manufacture. The fact was, that the poor catholic was obliged to pay what his rich neighbour was excused from paying. Such was the practice in Ireland, even in the teeth of the law, up to 1800, the period of the union. In that year, agistment tithe was declared illegal by act of parliament, and this was the condition on which the protestant landowners assented to the union. Such being the system of tithes in Ireland, was it surprising that it should be a perpetual source of irritation—that it should be employed by the disaffected as an engine to work upon the passions of the multitude? But the evil by no means stopped here. The rector was obliged to employ a tithe-proctor to collect his tithes. Labour in Ireland was very inadequately paid, and instead of money the labourer was in the habit of hiring a potatoe-garden at an exorbitant rate, the rent of which he did not pay in money, but in work to his landlord. On this wretched pittance of the labourer the rector was obliged to levy his tithes, and the tithe-proctor was for that purpose called into action. He collects, either in money or in kind, the tenth of the produce of the potatoe-garden; or he takes a bill from the peasant, payable at a short date. If the bill be not paid, then away go the pigs and the furniture of the wretched peasant, which are seized for the tithes. This was not the end of the lamentable detail. The peasants of whole districts were often so connected by being sureties for one another, that when the tithe-proctor appeared among them, he was hunted like a mad dog, and the church not only lost its dues, but fell into disgrace. Tithes, as at present levied, were a most mischievous tax, collected in the most unequal and harassing manner. It was the duty of the House to take into their immediate consideration this never-failing source of irritation and disturbance—to extinguish, if possible, this ever-burning Etna. It was not his wish that the House should take this statement on his own *ipse dixit;* he proposed that the facts should be inquired into by the examination of witnesses, and he had no doubt that some remedy might be discovered. His own opinion was, that an acreable land-tax, proportioned to the rent, should be substituted for the support of the church, and that commissioners should be appointed for carrying some such measure into effect throughout the whole of Ireland. He had no hesitation in saying, that this would remedy one of the principal grievances of Ireland, and tend more than any thing else to allay the irritation of the catholic labourer, who thus would not have the tithe-proctor in his potatoe garden, estimating the tenth part of his children's food.—Another grievance to which he should direct attention was, the state of the jurisdiction of grand juries in Ireland. No one part of its internal administration did so much mischief. He alluded now to their powers, which they exercised in the presentment of roads, and which were too often employed for private objects and individual jobbing. He stated the effect of the mode of swearing that a particular road was out of repair in a district or barony, in many cases to be, that money was raised in that district which afterwards went into the pocket of a tenant, to enable him to pay his landlord's rent. This mode of presentment should be taken entirely out of the hands of the grand juries.—The noble marquis next adverted to another grievance in the state of Ireland, namely, that though the mode of appointing high sheriffs was theoretically the same as in this country, yet practically they were appointed exclusively by the Crown: it would be better were they taken from a list of the gentry in rotation.—The noble marquis next adverted to the state of the magistracy in Ireland. Owing to the frequent disturbances which had prevailed, gentlemen of property and influence had either been driven into towns, or induced to leave the country. Hence the number of magistrates was small, while the office itself became one of great labour and fatigue, and, during the unquiet times which had prevailed, many persons had got into the office who ought not to be in it. The duty of selecting or dismissing magistrates should be intrusted to parliamentary commissioners.—The last point on which he should touch, and perhaps the blackest part of the picture, was the financial state of Ireland. He should show their lordships that the quantum of nett revenue which Ireland produced was very far from paying even the interest of her national debt. Here the noble marquis read, from a paper which he held in his hand, the following statement of the Funded Debt of Ireland, the Charge on that debt, and the nett revenue paid into exchequer at various periods since the 5th of January 1791:

Jan. 5,	Capital of Funded Debt.	Annual Charge of ditto.	Nett Revenue paid into Ex.
1791,	1,710,000	114,200	1,184,000
1794,	2,130,000	134,000	1,067,000
1797,	5,825,000	369,000	1,527,000
1800,	24,570,000	1,315,000	2,805,000
		with Sink. Fd.	
1803,	39,500,000	1,983,000	3,314,000
1806,	58,340,000	2,867,000	3,364,000
		as left by Mr. Pitt,	497,000 surplus.
1808,	70,647,000	3,382,000	4,378,000
		left by sir J. Newport,	996,000 surplus.
1812,	92,729,000	4,384,000	4,210,000
			174,000 deficiency.
To this must be added, 4,500,000*l.* on British Loan borrowed for Ireland in 1811, and for which no provision is made.			
1815,	127,865,000	5,932,000	5,479,000
			453,000 deficiency.
1816,	not yet known.	6,825,000	5,845,000
			980,000 deficiency.

Almost every tax had been doubled. The assessed taxes had been trebled. In short, every exertion had been made to screw up the taxes of Ireland to the utmost. What could this be called but a state of national bankruptcy in that country? There was also apparently a falling off in the linen manufacture, the staple of Ireland. In 1792, the exports of Irish linens amounted to about 49,000,000 of yards, almost entirely to England. In 1815, the exports amounted only to about 39,000,000 of yards, owing to the want of capital in this country, and Silesian linens meeting them in the market. The export of woollens from England into Ireland had also materially diminished. Unfortunately also it so happened, that the remission of the war malt duty could give the people little relief, because the national taste had entirely changed, and there was nothing but illicit distillation going on from one end of the kingdom to the other. The finances of Ireland could only be looked at in this point of view—namely, to see what she could fairly pay, and the rest we must take on ourselves; for Ireland never could, and, what was more, never would, pay the balance. On the whole, he flattered himself that he had stated enough to show a parliamentary ground for inquiry. The time was now come when a refusal to entertain a motion of this kind would be construed by Ireland into a declaration of total neglect of her interests. The question was, whether the attachment of a generous people was to be gained for ever by measures of conciliation? Parliament might throw away their advantages; they might indeed retain possession of the country by arms; but the affections of the people would be entirely severed. The lower orders, desponding and degraded, would be idle by day, and vigilant only in the night for plans of blood—the future rule of this country would be signalized only by undiminished exertions to put down rebellion and disorder. He presented to his own mind, however, a more pleasing prospect; and if, by drawing the attention of parliament to the subject, he should be the humble instrument of alleviating any of the grievances under which Ireland laboured, he should think of this night's debate with pride and satisfaction to the last moment of his life. The noble marquis concluded with moving, "That a committee be appointed to take into consideration the state of Ireland."

The Archbishop of *Cashel* made several observations upon what had fallen from the noble marquis on the subject of tithes in Ireland, but in so low a tone that they were not audible below the bar. He said that tithes formed a close relation between the established church and the mass of the Irish people, and he defied any man to bring forward a case of abuse in the collection of them by the clergy that could require parliamentary interference; and contended, that it was a mistake to assert that the land-owners had been successful in shifting the burthens of the tithes from their own shoulders to those of the poor tenantry.

The Marquis of *Buckingham* explained, that he had not intended to bring forward any charge against the clergy of Ireland; the evil was to be found in the system of government there, by which the collectors of tythes were driven from the pastures of the rich to the potatoe gardens of the poor.

The Earl of *Liverpool* said, that from his official knowledge, he was able to confirm many of the statements of the reverend prelate, than whom he was convinced there was not upon the episcopal bench an individual more anxious in the discharge of his duties, more attentive to his diocese, or more revered and esteemed by those who were placed under him. The noble earl said, he was fully sensible of the magnitude and difficulty of the subject then before their lordships; and, considering how many inflammatory topics might have been introduced, he could not help complimenting the noble marquis upon the temper and moderation he had displayed throughout his speech, which had placed his motion in the most favourable light. He must, however, differ in many essential particulars from the noble marquis; and his first and principal objection to the proposition was, that it was not at all calculated to secure the object that ministers not less than the noble marquis, had in view. If it was acceded to, the consequence would be, either that a committee of the whole House should be formed, or that a select committee should be appointed. From the first, he was convinced, by experience, that no practical beneficial result could be obtained; and to the last, the House on such a question would probably not think it expedient to delegate its powers. Committees of the whole House on the state of the nation had sometimes been agreed to, but had never been productive of any real advantage; in fact, on a general question like that of the present state of Ireland, so many discordant feelings would prevail, and so many conflicting opinions as to what was and what was not an evil, would be found, that a satisfactory issue to the inquiry could not be hoped; but if a particular case were made out, if sufficient ground were laid for instituting an investigation into any one branch of this extensive subject, he would be one of the first to support a motion for a select committee.—The noble marquis had fairly stated, that in taking a view of the condition of Ireland, he should disregard all considerations of a party nature, as to the particular governments established at different periods; and should only revert to the past as explanatory of the future, to which attention was more especially to be directed. Lord Liverpool said, he was most willing to admit that the system of government established originally for Ireland, and which had long prevailed, had been radically defective and vicious. It was a system of short-sighted policy, that sacrificed the real interests of Ireland to the supposed interests of Great Britain—he called them supposed interests, because true and enlightened policy demanded that the prosperity of each should be equally promoted, since the one could not flourish while the other was in a state of decay [Hear, hear!]. He could not allow, however, that during the present reign that mistaken system had been pursued: on the contrary, for the last fifty years, a system of concession to, and of accumulation of benefits upon Ireland had been invariably supported; and in favour of this assertion he could quote the opinion even of a noble baron opposite, delivered in a former session. The whole plan had been altered, and every exertion had been used to ameliorate the state of Ireland; but, because much had been done, he did not mean to state that no more should be attempted. In fact, progressive improvement was a fresh spur to perseverance; and if fundamental differences existed between the two sides of the House upon some important points, it was not on that account necessary that it should shut its eyes upon measures of benefit to Ireland. For himself, and for his colleagues in office, he could lay his hand upon his heart and say, that whenever a question had arisen between England and Ireland, the advantage had uniformly been given to the latter. In proof of the correctness of this statement, he needed only to refer to the corn bill of last year; which, if it were of doubtful advantage to England, was of certain benefit to Ireland. It was not his wish to understate the evils under which Ireland still laboured, but it could not be questioned that they were rapidly disappearing: within the last fifty years her prosperity had increased beyond that of any other country in the world. If the agriculture of England had doubled, and that of Scotland had trebled, it was not unfair to assert that the agriculture of Ireland had quadrupled: since the Union, her commerce had been carried to twice its former extent.—It was undoubtedly true, that in the course of the last summer it had been found expedient to put in force the laws for securing the internal tranquillity of Ireland, and the conduct of government in this respect had met with the approbation of all parties. It might be said, that this fact proved the existence of some evils; and the question, therefore, resolved itself to this—what were those evils? As to the disturbances which existed last year, and during the period when a noble duke opposite (Bedford) was at the head of the Irish government, his lordship was convinced that they were to be ascribed only to the lawless and dissolute conduct of some of the lower orders of the inhabitants, and not to any fretfulness at prevailing religious distinctions. Since the operation of the insurrection act, the outrages had been directed indiscriminately against Catholics and Protestants, without the intervention of religious animosities. What, then, was the fair conclusion? It was, that the amelioration so much desired by all was to be accomplished by the education of the lower classes—by inculcating principles, and encouraging habits of order and tranquillity [Hear, hear!]. All experience showed that this was the best and the only remedy. About a century ago the situation of Scotland was nearly similar to the state of Ireland at present. By a work written by Mr. Fletcher, of Saltoun, it appeared that in 1698 there were no less than two hundred thousand mendicants in Scotland, who lived under no subjection, obeying neither the laws of God nor man; that fathers among them incestuously cohabited with their daughters, and brothers with their sisters; that they assembled to feast and riot during many days, and that men and women, perpetually intoxicated, indulged themselves in most horrible oaths and blasphemies. What was the condition of the lower classes in Scotland at the present day? They were even more orderly, regular, sober, and industrious, than the peasantry of England, and all crimes were of less frequent commission—not from a better administration of civil and criminal justice, not from a more effectual representation; for in both these respects England had the advantage; but from the improved state of civilization. The same means that produced these effects in the one case would not fail in the other; and a commission had been regularly appointed for the purpose, from which some important benefits had already resulted, without the interposition of parliament—an interposition which persons of all persuasions had deemed inexpedient. It was a prejudice now indulged by few, that legislation could accomplish objects in this case which in no other it had ever attained.—The points upon which the noble marquis had touched were—1. The Catholic question; 2. Tithes; 3. Grand juries; 4. The appointment of magistrates; 5. Finances. Upon each of these he would say a few words. As to the Catholic question, he agreed in the general proposition of the noble mover, but he doubted its application; whatever the merits or demerits of that subject of repeated discussion might be, he was firmly convinced that it had no connexion with any of the evils of Ireland, and that concession to the claims of the Catholics would have no sensible effect in preventing the disturbances so often lamented—the same seeds of discontent would still remain. With regard to the Catholic claims, he had ever considered it a simple question—convinced that guards and securities frequently debated could be of no avail, and that the point to be decided was merely that of concession or non-concession. [Hear, hear.]—He could assure the noble marquis that the subject of tithes had occupied the most serious attention of government: the principle no doubt was, that the right to tithes stood on the same footing in England and Ireland, but the propriety of a fair commutation in the latter, under the peculiar circumstances, was a very different question, and his lordship was inclined to think that such a commutation might be effected. The late secretary for Ireland had bestowed much time upon the topic, without yet coming to a definite conclusion; and unless some noble lord should step forward with some outline of a feasible plan, he would oppose the hasty interposition of parliament.—As to the third point, which related to grand juries, he admitted that great evils existed; but the attention of the other House of Parliament had been last year directed to it; a committee had been appointed, and he believed a bill had been prepared, which it was hoped would afford an effectual remedy. If their lordships did not think it expedient to wait until that bill should be sent from the Commons, he had not the slightest objection to a previous investigation. He did not mean to deny, in the present state of Ireland, when so many persons of property and character were non-resident, that improper individuals were sometimes included in the commissions of the peace; but he most firmly believed, that the magistrates selected were, in general, selected from the most respectable inhabitants, and for whose appointment ministers were responsible. He could not, therefore, assent to the project thrown out of a separate commission for the nomination of magistrates in Ireland, by which the Crown would be there deprived of its acknowledged prerogative. As to the last point, the finances of Ireland, he did not think it necessary to follow the noble marquis through the details into which he had entered: three committees had already made full reports upon this complicated subject; and he was happy to be able to state, that it was the intention of ministers, immediately after the recess, to effect a general system of consolidation for the treasury departments of Great Britain and Ireland, which he hoped would meet with the willing sanction of both branches of the legislature. If the noble marquis was desirous that the House should be provided with information which it did not now possess, the reports of the committees upon the finances of Ireland might be laid upon the table.—After all, as he had before stated, the great, indeed the sole effectual remedy for these grievances was, the bettering of the state of the poor, which had been much retarded by the non-residence of persons of fortune, and which, next to education, would most tend to the civilization of the natives of Ireland. He admitted the pressing nature of this question, and the importance of rendering Ireland a source of riches and of strength; but he did not think that a single practical object could be attained by the motion of the noble marquis. The intervention of the authority of parliament might excite expectations that could not be realized, and perhaps retard if not defeat the very object in view, by an imprudent precipitation of remedies of slow but certain operation.

The Earl of *Rosslyn* thought, that as it seemed generally agreed that the only mode of remedying the evils of Ireland was by the introduction of good and wise laws, a committee was the best place for taking into consideration what laws would be most wise and most beneficial. The noble earl had quoted a very striking passage from an eloquent writer on the state of Scotland a century ago; but, admitting that Fletcher of Saltoun had given an unexaggerated statement of the then condition of his countrymen, he would refer the noble lord, with the full benefits of this concession, to the state of Scotland previous to the period alluded to. He would ask him, what had been the cause of the general disorder, of the profligate contempt of the decencies, and affections, and moral feelings of social life? The noble lord, if he had looked back, would have found that this frightful catalogue of vices was to be traced to the misconduct of the government. Such a state of society was the natural result of a tyrannical government, acting upon a brave and determined people whose religion they insulted and endeavoured to subvert by a series of the most cruel persecutions; whose very worship was exercised in the midst of violence, one half of the congregation standing ready armed to fight, while the other half were praying. Such had been the cause of the evils. Now, what had been the remedies? The religion of the majority was restored: the ministers of the Gospel were reinstated in their functions: and the people were again allowed to see the tranquil re-establishment of all those to whose advice and instruction they looked up with confidence and love. In one, word, the national church was perfectly restored. Those who well considered the subject, would see that this, and not education, had been the primary remedy for those terrible evils. He was quite ready to admit the great benefits of the system of education which had been introduced, and thought it particularly calculated to be beneficial from its connexion with the national religion. He did not mean to undervalue the religious establishments of other countries, but he thought that degree of confident communication between the pastor and his flock, which was the result of the Scotch establishment, was the radical cause of the moral habits of the people. Now, let this be applied to Ireland, and he did not think that the application would be useless. He firmly believed, that if the disabilities arising from religion were removed, by that one measure more good would be effected than by almost any other. Another allusion had been made to Scotland on the subject of tithes: it should be recollected that a great relief had been extended to Scotland, not only with respect to the payment of tithes, but as to the vexatious mode of collecting them. The noble lord here entered into an elaborate argument, to show the vexatious mode of collecting tithes in Ireland, which was at once oppressive and expensive, impoverishing and ruining the poor tenant, and operating as a direct tax even on the wages of the day-labourer.—He trusted that his statement had proved the necessity of an inquiry into the question, since it so plainly appeared, that the tithe system was a much greater grievance in Ireland than in this country. He thought the mode of appointing sheriffs in Ireland a crying grievance, connected as it was with the grand juries and all the abuses which might arise out of the wrong exercise of their powers. He thought that Catholic emancipation, however granted, and under whatever limitations, would, if it did not put an end to clamour, at least compose all the rancour arising from religious differences. It would at once put an end to the power of those unprincipled men, who, without any conscientious wishes for relief, agitated their country with clamour for immediate emancipation. If, after all, it should be determined that a military establishment was the only mode of governing Ireland, he must submit; but he should regret that no investigation was instituted which might hold out some hope of relief to a people peculiarly accessible to kindness, and who, ever open to the influences of gratitude, might be easily governed by a system of conciliation.

Earl *Stanhope* rose, in the first place, to express his distinct approbation of the opinion delivered by the noble earl opposite, that if the concessions to the Irish Catholics were once admitted by parliament, they should be given in a plain and simple shape—meaning, of course, that they should be unrestricted by conditions, and least of all by that odious and mischievous accompaniment, called the Veto. He congratulated the noble earl on the possession of such an opinion, one in which he was afraid he stood alone on that side of the House; "for I am afraid (continued earl Stanhope) that if we went to a division on this point, the noble earl's opinion would be an individual one on his side of the House, and that he would find himself, as I have often done, in a minority of one." The fact was, that this question of the Veto was first forced upon them by mistaken or mischievous Catholics. The first time he had ever heard of it was from the mouth of the late Charles Fox, who merely stated the fact as a proposition in agitation, without however by any means sanctioning it with his recommendation. "My answer, on that occasion," said lord Stanhope, "I well remember—it was this, that I was sorry to hear of such an offer, because it appeared to me an unjust and profligate proposition; and I retain the same opinion still. Would any man of common sense, be his religion what it may, allow another of quite a different and perhaps an opposite faith, to interfere, either directly or indirectly, in the appointment of his own pastors, and above all with those at the head of his church? The Catholics would indeed think, and very justly too, that the refusal of the prayer of their just claims was an act of injustice; but they would also feel that the hint to grant them with a vetoistical appendage would be worse than injustice—and in fact nothing short of downright insult."—If the question of Catholic emancipation had no other chance of success than with this stipulation, earl Stanhope hoped that all sides of the House would vote against it. It was a monstrous proposition. He was happy to hear, in the course of the debate, that a system of education for the peasantry of Ireland, or, indeed, for any poor set of persons, had at length grown into fashion. The diffusion of knowledge would do a great deal towards ameliorating the condition of a people. But in looking at the state of Ireland, one great evil had escaped attention on the present occasion—he alluded to the horrid state of the poor peasant from the exaction of the middleman. The laws in this respect were terrible—they allowed the middleman not only to come down on the occupying tenant for an arrear of rent, but also on the other intermediate owners, through whom the possession descended; so that the tenant in possession was exposed to the accumulated claims of all parties. He had known one instance in which the rent was but 100*l.* and the claim in process against the person was, by this accumulation, no less than 2,000*l.* for this single transaction. There was also another bitter grievance existing in Ireland, it was of that class which did not affect property, but sorely affected feeling—he meant the countenanced insults of Orangemen to their Catholic fellow countrymen. This was carried into such practical operation, that he had conversed with Catholic priests and gentlemen, who stated, that of two evils, they would prefer the getting rid of the Orange system to the success of the emancipation question; and, indeed, that sooner than submit to the practical operation of Orange intolerance, they would prefer the re-enactment of the penal code. It was not merely for their own outrages that the Orangemen were answerable, but for the illegal associations which, in their turn, they engendered. The Orangeman excluded from the society all but his own class; the Ribbonman followed the same example; and so both went on from one lawless outrage to another, until they hardly left the country worth living in.—So much for party politics in Ireland! As to the question of tithes they were quite on a different footing in Ireland to that which they held in this country: they presented a wide field of inquiry which ought to be explored. It was said that they were necessary for the permanence of the church establishment: that might be the fact, though he did not think so. Indeed, he would support the church in quite a different manner—he would not call on the Catholic and dissenting population of Ireland, who were in the ratio of ten to one to the Protestant, to come forward and contribute to the maintenance of a church in which they never set their foot. He would adopt a much easier and a safer mode of supporting the church: he would take the plan of the late lord Melville, when he was Henry Dundas.—It was an admirable plan, and quite different from that of the noble marquis—it was in the phrase of the shrewd Scotchman, no less than this—"that the best way of securing the permanence of the church establishment was, by placing it on the rock of poverty" [A laugh, as earl Stanhope delivered this sentence in a broad Scotch dialect, in imitation of the late lord Melville].

The Earl of *Aberdeen* did not see how any practical advantage could arise from the proposed committee. When he said this, he did not mean to say that the greatest attention should not be paid to the acknowledged distresses of Ireland. At the same time it should be recollected, that the whole of Ireland was not in that state of extreme distress and agitation. The north of Ireland was tranquil, and, in respect to its agriculture, more flourishing than many districts in England. One great imperfection wanted remedy; and he was the more anxious to mention it, because it had not been touched upon by the noble marquis. He alluded to the state of the revenue laws, which were, he conceived, productive of much of the moral evils of Ireland. On the subject of Catholic emancipation, he would merely say, that though he did not expect that the removal of disabilities would dissipate all the troubles of Ireland, yet he thought the question should be immediately adjusted in the spirit of conciliation.

The Earl of *Darnley* concurred in opinion with the noble lord who had last spoken, as to the vices which were fostered by the revenue laws in Ireland. Although many persons might be rather too sanguine in their expectations of what might be the result of the deliberations of parliament, yet still the distress of the country was of such a nature as to induce their lordships to entertain the proposition. He was convinced that nothing would tend so much to restore tranquillity to Ireland, as setting to rest the question of Catholic emancipation. That boon, so much desired by the Catholics of Ireland, and so necessary for the welfare of the empire at large, was founded on the immutable principles of justice, and must eventually be granted. The sooner, therefore, it was granted the better.

The Earl of *Blessington* observed, that the Catholic question was not applicable to Ireland alone; but when introduced into the House should be treated as embracing also the Roman Catholics of England. The distresses of Ireland could not, he said, by any possibility, be traced to that question. He complimented the clergy of Ireland, particularly the bench of bishops, and declared that the tithes were levied in that country in a manner as little distressing as possible. He did not think that a commutation of tithes would be attended with any advantage. He stated, that in Ireland much disadvantage arose from there being several trading magistrates, who held shops for justice, and sold it at sixpence or a shilling a head. He thought the present distillery laws should be repealed; the whole system was oppressive, and could never be effective, as the last character an Irishman would adopt was that of an informer. In consequence, ninety-nine innocent persons paid for one guilty. But to think of preventing the Irish from drinking whiskey, was altogether out of the question. He agreed with the noble marquis, that the system of grand jury presentments was extremely disgraceful, and one merely of jobbing, on the principle of "give me one road and I'll give you another." He thought the hearth money tax required revision, and that the rich should pay instead of the poor.

Lord *Redesdale* said, he could not agree with the observations which had fallen from some noble lords in the course of the debate, that the mere improvement in the education of the people of Ireland, would accomplish all the objects so ardently desired. It was to be remembered, that there were other circumstances which operated upon the minds of the lower classes of that country, which no improvement in education could reach, unless they could also remove a number of strong prejudices. Those circumstances took their origin as far back as the commencement of the thirteenth century, the period when Ireland became a conquered country. In using the words "a conquered country," he begged to be understood as applying them in no invidious sense, but only in the same manner as we now historically mentioned the conquest of England by the Normans. To that remote period might be traced the seeds of most of those disorders which had so long distracted the tranquillity and retarded the prosperity of Ireland. During that long and eventful interval, no measures had been taken to bring the people of Ireland under a due and salutary obedience to the laws. That obedience they never had practised; that obedience they did not even now practise; and hence the turbulence and disquiet which incessantly prevailed. The want of that obedience had been observed and lamented, even as far back as the commencement of the seventeenth century, when it was stated as a matter of complaint and regret by sir John Davis, who was attorney-general to James 1st. The first and great object therefore that ought to occupy the attention of any legislature, which was sincerely anxious to ameliorate the condition of Ireland, ought to be to bring all classes of society in that country, the rich as well as the poor, under a proper obedience to the laws. There might be a difference of opinion as to the best mode of accomplishing this object, but he believed there could be none as to the necessity of the object itself, for until it was accomplished, they would never be able to effect the peace and tranquillity of that country. Another source of the disturbed state in which it so generally existed, might be found in the general laxity of some of the minor duties of domestic life. He would venture to affirm, without fear of contradiction, that there was a deficiency in the education of the people of Ireland, from the highest to the lowest. So general was that deficiency, that even the proper obedience which a son owed to his father was never paid, till the former had advanced to a certain period of life, and it was a common observation, that an Irish peasant never exacted obedience from his son, till he was capable of labour, and then the first operation was to knock him down, in order to make him work. The education, in fact, which the people of that country required, was not merely to learn reading and writing, but to acquire good morals, correct notions of conduct, a sense of obedience to those to whom they owed obedience, and a good disposition towards the government. It followed, as a matter of course, that where men paid no respect to the laws, the laws could never be vigorously or impartially executed; and the consequence was, that every man endeavoured to protect himself, either by fraud, by violence, or by falsehood, because he knew that the law would not protect him. Prejudices like those, and others which he would not detain their lordships by enumerating, required to be removed, before it was possible that Ireland could enjoy the same tranquillity and prosperity as were possessed by England; they were indeed of such a character, so active in their operation, so deep rooted, and so violent, that they were utterly incompatible with every thing like the repose and welfare of the country. A great deal had been said by several noble lords respecting the nomination of sheriffs in Ireland, and the consequent administration of the law. Certainly, he was willing to admit that there was a corrupt administration of the law in the execution of writs, &c. by the persons who exercised that office, and during the time that he filled a high official situation in the country, he had found it necessary, on many occasions, freely to animadvert upon the subject. He believed, also, that those noble lords who had any opportunity of being acquainted with the facts, would do him the justice to acknowledge, that he never shrunk from the exercise of his duty on such occasions, and that he did procure an obedience to the law in that respect, much beyond what had formerly been attained. He was, however, most willing to admit, that upon that subject some interference on the part of the legislature was loudly called for.—As to the committee proposed by the noble marquis who had brought forward the motion, so far as that committee was to inquire into the merits of the Catholic claims, he would remind their lordships that they had already distinctly refused a committee for such a purpose, because it was a subject which could not possibly derive any benefit from a preliminary discussion in a committee. The proper, and the only way of considering it, would be by bringing forward a distinct and specific proposition, for a distinct and specific measure; that was the only beneficial mode of proceeding, and that decision had been repeatedly given.—The next topic to which he should advert was that of tithes—a most important one in every point of view, as connected with Ireland. He happened, himself, to be a tithe-owner, and being so, he knew something of the evils belonging to the system as it now existed. He knew, also, that it was a system which, in its present operation, was the cause of great and continual irritation. When he held his official situation in Ireland, he had devoted no inconsiderable portion of his time to the consideration of the subject, in the hope that he might be able, by means of his own efforts, united with the suggestions of others, to do something for the benefit of the Catholic peasantry of that country. At that time, a proposition was communicated to him (he believed the idea originated with Dr. Sturges) for a commutation of the tithes upon the following plan:—It was proposed that a commission should be appointed to value the tithes of every parish in Ireland for 21 years: at the expiration of that period, a fresh commission should be appointed, and so on at the respective termination of each seven years. The amount of the tithes so valued was to be charged upon the parish, and their value raised by a rate or assessment, like any other parochial tax. He even went so far as to frame an act, founded upon that principle, and embracing its fundamental character. He afterwards submitted it to the opinion of government, but what became of it, when the administration was changed, he knew not. In drawing up the act he saw many general objections which might be made to its principle, but still it appeared to him as the most feasible plan of any which had come under his notice, because it secured a compensation for the tithes that were to be commuted, which increased in its value, in proportion to the increasing value of the products of the land. Certainly, signal advantage would be gained to Ireland from some mode of commutation or other, but he must say, that so far as his own experience went, he found the landed gentlemen of the country more averse to any commutation than the clergy themselves were.—With respect to the general question of the state of Ireland, though he could not agree to the present motion, he trusted that the government and the legislature would do something for its relief and amelioration. Above all, he hoped that they would endeavour to secure obedience to the laws in every part. He was aware, the government alone, could not effect all that was required: they could not accomplish the necessary improvement in the condition of the people, without receiving assistance from the people themselves. No one could be more averse than he was, to the idea, that the population of Ireland should be taught to look up to a military force as the only means for their protection. He remonstrated against that doctrine when he was in Ireland, he would remonstrate against it now; he would rather that the people should be taught to look to the magistracy of the country, that they should be taught to seek their own happiness in the due support and the due administration of the laws. It was by those means, and by those means alone, in his opinion, that any real, any practical, any permanent benefit could be obtained for Ireland; but he did not see how that end could be accomplished by going into the committee proposed by the noble marquis, and therefore, conceiving the appointment of such a committee would not answer the professed object it had in view, he should feel it his duty to vote against the motion.

The Earl of *Caernarvon* said, that if any additional arguments were needed to show the propriety of his noble friend's motion, those arguments might be found in the speeches of the noble lords who intended to oppose it. They all agreed that great evils existed, and that some remedies ought to be proposed; but how could any remedies be adequately discussed, except in a committee? Some, indeed, had recommended that they should wait a little longer, and that the gradual diffusion of education among the lower classes in Ireland would accomplish all that was wanted. He thought they had waited long enough, for they had waited during centuries. Besides, it had been declared that night, that no people were better educated than the Irish, and yet the state of Ireland was yearly growing worse and worse. It was a fair presumption, therefore, that education alone would not do what was necessary for her welfare and repose. Catholic emancipation was, by some, regarded as a certain remedy, while others contended that the concession of that question would only partially remove the evils complained of. Where could those conflicting opinions be better reconciled than in a committee, and surely the magnitude of the interests at stake would at least justify the trial. With respect to tithes, upon which so much had been said, and which was indeed a most important point for consideration, as affecting the present disturbed state of Ireland, he thought that House ought to pause before they determined that no practical remedy could be found in the inquiries of a committee. Ireland was in a most extraordinary and anomalous condition in regard to her religion. The larger part of her population was catholic, and the ministers towards whose support they were required to contribute, was of a different persuasion. He believed there was no country in the world where such an anomaly existed; and he was quite sure that it could not continue permanent, consistently with the tranquillity and prosperity of the nation. He was far from wishing that any system should be adopted which would affect the rights of property. He admitted those rights, as to tithes, to be vested in the patron or incumbent; and they ought to be respected. It was argued that they could not, in justice, call upon individuals to make a sacrifice. If the safety of the state absolutely required such a sacrifice, he, for one, should consider the government failed in its duty if it did not enforce it; but, at the same time, he had little doubt it would be possible to devise some measure which should relieve the catholic peasant from the grinding oppression under which he now laboured, and yet consult the interest of the protestant tithe holder. It was in a committee, however, and in a committee only, that any inquiries could be made, or any plan matured, for such a purpose. It would never be done if left to the specific propositions which any individual member of that House might propose. It was contended that the labours of a committee would be so protracted, that it would be impossible to foresee their termination. He doubted whether there would be such an indefinite extension of inquiry; but one thing at least was certain, that if they never began they would never end [Hear, hear!]. Grant the committee; and after the lapse of a few weeks they would then perhaps be able to determine its utility. Every thing which he had that night heard proved the necessity of inquiry. He thought the case made out by the noble marquis unanswerably strong; but really he was now almost tempted to consider it as weak and insufficient, compared with the arguments of the noble lords opposite. Their objects was the same; they only differed about the means. If they waited till a bill or bills were brought in by any individual, with a view to remedy particular branches of the evil complained of, they might wait long enough. No bill could have any chance of success which did not originate in a comprehensive view of that great subject, and he wished to try the experiment, if it were only for the sake of variety. He had no doubt they would receive the cordial support of the people for whom they legislated, if they applied themselves to the task diligently and with sincerity.

Lord *St. Germains* said, that in his opinion the mode of inquiry proposed by the noble marquis was not such a one as that House ought to adopt, because it did not seem calculated to attain the desired object.

Lord *Holland* observed, that it was not his intention to enter at any great length into the vast variety of topics which had been brought forward, but barely to state the nature of the question then before their lordships. If ever there was a topic upon which a motion such as that proposed by his noble friend was fit to be acceded to, it was the present one, which called for an inquiry into the state of Ireland. He was the more persuaded of its necessity, from all that had fallen from every side of the House in the course of the debate. No one denied that great evils existed; no one denied that those evils required a remedy; they only differed as to the nature of the remedies, and, in some instances, as to the causes that had produced the evils. If they rejected the motion of the noble marquis, Ireland would have great reason to complain of their injustice. After having united the parliaments of the two kingdoms upon a solemn promise to do away all the injuries that had so long aggrieved the sister country, we were now, at the end of sixteen years from the adoption of that measure, to send an army of 25,000 men to re-conquer that unhappy nation [Hear, hear!]. It had been the curse of Ireland to have bad governments, and a large proportion of her sufferings and discontent was to be traced to that cause [Hear, hear!]. Her claim to be heard was unequivocally strong and imperative. We had, by force, by menace, and by seduction, deprived her of her legislature; we had united her with ourselves; we were bound to watch over her prosperity with the same zeal and anxiety that we watched over our own. Whatever arguments might have been formerly urged against inquiry and reformation, could not be urged at present. We were now in a state of profound peace, and there was nothing to prevent them from going into a solemn and deliberate inquiry. The necessity of inquiry was allowed by all, and it was refused only because those who called for it were not prepared to bring forward specific remedies. He confessed, for his own part, that he had no nostrum to propose, but did it therefore follow that it was impossible to alleviate the calamities that afflicted Ireland? He thought one great measure of conciliation would be to grant catholic emancipation, but a noble and learned lord considered that question as unfit to be agitated in a committee, because their lordships, on a former occasion, had determined not to refer it to one. Some other noble lord might have a different remedy to propose, but unless every thing was specifically stated in the first instance, all motions for a committee were to be rejected. While such arguments prevailed, what chance was there that Ireland would ever be relieved—what probability that she would cease to be persecuted? [Hear, hear!] He used the word persecuted, for none other could correctly designate our conduct towards her. Could any noble lord who heard him, conscientiously affirm that we were not the persecutors of the Irish people? Was it no persecution, was it no oppression, that they should behold themselves nominally connected with a free government, and yet be told that they were to enjoy no participation in the offices of that government? He thought that prohibition a great calamity to Ireland: he thought it a much greater calamity to the United Kingdom; and it was deeply to be lamented, for the sake of the interests of the established church, that the question of catholic emancipation was not put at rest before the union of the two countries [Hear, hear!]. He was sure that many persons voted for that measure upon a firm belief that the claims of the catholics would be conceded. A noble and learned lord had argued, that when all the evils which afflicted Ireland were properly developed, and when the remedies for those evils were suggested, it would then be a fit occasion for going into an inquiry; but that till then, inquiry would only have a tendency to inflame the public mind, by raising hopes which perhaps would ultimately be disappointed. He did not think any rational hopes would be disappointed if a committee were granted, and if the committee went honestly and fairly into the business. But why was the *onus* of finding remedies cast upon that side of the House? Did the noble and learned lord himself suggest any during the time that he filled a high and important office in that country? Has he proposed any since he returned, and since he has been receiving (honourably receiving, he admitted) the salary of an ex-chancellor? In fact, however, the true course would be to proceed by inquiry, to ascertain the causes, the extent, and the nature of the evils, and then to provide such remedies as might seem best calculated to remove or ameliorate them. It was their duty to do that, or else why did they sit at all? There was a period, he believed, in the history of this country, when their lordships were voted useless and vexatious [Hear, hear! and a laugh]; and really, if the doctrines which he had heard that night were to be acted upon permanently, he should not be surprised if they were again to be voted useless [Hear!]. At least they would deserve to be so voted in his opinion. The question was one of great and vital importance to the general welfare of the whole kingdom; but it was for government to originate the necessary inquiry, because it was only by its sanction and efforts that any practical benefits could result. The system of tithes was an enormous source of irritation and discontent, yet it had been represented by a right reverend prelate as forming a close relation between the established church and the mass of the Irish people. It might form a close relation; but he should like to know whether it was an amicable one? He should like to be informed what principle of conciliation there was in taking the tenth part of the produce of a poor cotter's potato garden, to support the ministers of a religion which he neither professed nor believed? [Hear, hear!] In truth, the situation of Ireland with respect to our ecclesiastical character, was absolutely without precedent, and it was one that never could be productive of any good. He did not wish to invade the rights of property; but the property of the church, like every other species of property in this country, was liable to regulation and modification by the acts of the legislature. As a proof that it was so in Ireland, he need only remind their lordships that the Irish parliament, by abolishing the tithes of agistment, not only unjustly drove the tithe collector from the pastures of the rich, to the gardens of the poor, but essentially altered the whole nature and effect of the system of tithes. As an act of justice, therefore, as an act of wisdom, of policy, and of expediency, nay, as an act of grace to Ireland, he exhorted their lordships not to reject the motion of his noble friend, for inquiry. The causes of the calamities which weighed down that unhappy country, they all acknowledged to exist somewhere; their nature must be examined into. It was impossible that things could go on much longer in the way they had done. The whole state of Ireland, in her political, her civil, her religious condition, must come, sooner or later, before their lordships; and in no way could it come so beneficially, as by a deliberate and solemn inquiry of the imperial parliament. They would then see what the evils were, and they would then be able to ascertain what remedies they required, and of those remedies what were capable of being reduced to practice. Once more, therefore, he implored their lordships, as they valued their own character, as they valued the tranquillity and repose of Ireland, as they valued the general prosperity of the British empire, to accede to the motion of the noble marquis [Hear, hear!].

Lord *Grenville* said, he could not suffer the present question to go to a division without declaring his sentiments upon it; and he would argue for an inquiry, not merely upon the ground of propriety, but upon the ground of absolute necessity. He entreated their lordships to consider the situation in which they stood by the act of union, which made Ireland an integral part of the whole kingdom. They were not called upon to legislate for Great Britain only, but for the United Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland [Hear, hear!]. There was no part of the kingdom which called more loudly for the interference of parliament, than Ireland; there were no individuals in the community whose case was more entitled to consideration than the population of that country. They had indeed, a strong claim upon our justice. Every part of the soil of Ireland, every person inhabiting that soil, were justified in seeking redress—not soliciting it as a boon at their hands, but demanding it as a right [Hear, hear!]. Why did they unite with her, unless they meant to give her a union in the advantages, a participation in the constitution of this country, as well as in the name? When they consummated that union, they were bound, in the sight of God and man, to provide for the happiness of that country, and unless they faithfully discharged that duty, they usurped a power over it which they had no right to exercise [Hear, hear!]. The question then before them was simply, whether a possible case for interference had been made out. Good God! a possible case made out! It was proved by facts, which no one attempted to controvert, that one-third of the people for whom they had to legislate, were in a state little short of actual rebellion; it was proved that the tranquillity of the country could be maintained only by the presence of an army double the number that had ever before been kept up there in a time of peace, and yet it was doubted whether a possible case for inquiry had been made out! [Hear, hear!]. Without the presence of that armed force, it was undeniable that no property, no life, could be safe: justice herself could not fulfil her functions unless armed with bayonets. The agricultural distress of the country was enormous, and called for the strongest remedies. The system of tithes was oppressive, and ought to be reformed. They had been told, that the manner of collecting tithes in Ireland was so totally different from what was the practice here, that no man born in England could form any idea of their grievous and baneful operation. Yet, inquiry was to be resisted! Had any one ventured to contradict the statements of his noble friend? But it was not upon those statements alone that they had to rely. A noble and learned lord, whose authority upon all points was entitled to the highest consideration, but upon the present one more peculiarly so, had told them that the administration of justice in Ireland, was corrupted, was poisoned in its very sources, and perverted to purposes inconsistent with the essence of justice [Hear, hear!]. Their lordships need not be reminded, that not only the vigour and efficiency of the laws, but the habits and manners of a country depended much upon the way in which they were administered; but in Ireland, the very persons summoned those to determine the law, who afterwards executed it. With respect to grand jurors, they were also told that the performance of the duties entrusted to them was, in many instances, perverted from the purposes of justice, to answer individual purposes. And those statements were made, be it remembered, not by those who proposed the inquiry, but by those who would advise them to remain as they were, and abstain from all inquiry [Hear, hear!]. Was it possible to conceive any more monstrous inconsistency? As to remedies, he was thoroughly convinced that no remedy could be availing unless the leading feature of religious differences were removed. He alluded to catholic emancipation, and the opinion he had always held upon that subject he still retained. He did not, however, mean to go into that question at present, and he would only say, that there was a time, he most conscientiously believed, when that remedy, if it had been applied, would have been completely effectual as to all the then existing evils which afflicted Ireland, and would have prevented all that misery to which the refusal of it had subjected her for the last sixteen years. That time, however, was now past, and vain would be the hope to suppose that they could now place themselves in the situation in which they were when the act of union was passed. But though they could no longer do all, it was yet in their power to do much. One thing they certainly might do. They might arrest the progress of the evil; they might stop the accumulation of mischief; they might yet prevent that result to which the present system would infallibly lead—the total separation of Ireland from Great Britain [Hear, hear!]. He would say, therefore, that instead of there being any objection to include the consideration of the catholic claims in a committee, it would have been a narrow and imperfect view of the subject, had that part of it been omitted; for without the removal of those disabilities, he had no hesitation in saying, that all other remedies must be ineffectual [Hear, hear!]. He wished, however, to guard against the idea that the evils which oppressed Ireland were of such a nature, that any particular one might be selected as a topic for parliamentary interference. That was impossible. They were so complicated together, so inwoven one with another, so entangled by a long course of a bad and insincere policy, that they could not be disconnected. The inquiry, therefore, if gone into, as he trusted it would, must be a general and comprehensive one. Obedience to the laws was very properly regarded as a principal source of improvement. He admitted that no country could be tranquil or prosperous, where the laws were not generally obeyed; but before they could expect that general obedience, the laws themselves ought to be made equal to all [Hear, hear!]. And how was that to be effected? It must be the work of parliament: no government could do it. The authority of their lordships must be interposed; there was no other way. And it would be essential to bring to the consideration of the subject, not separate and detached views, but a general and unrestricted inquiry into every part of that system, from the continuance of which, had arisen the present necessity for inquiry. Education, about which so much had been said, and the effects of which he was far from having any disposition to undervalue, might do some good for the next generation; but what beneficial influence could it be expected to have upon the present one? Too much, however, seemed to be expected from the diffusion of education. The manners of a people were formed by the laws under which they lived. All that he had ever read, all that he had ever heard, justified him in laying down that maxim; and he need only refer to this country, for the visible effects produced upon the manners and conditions of a people, by the operation of wise and equal laws. The noble lord concluded by earnestly entreating their lordships not to reject the proposition of his noble relative.

Lord *Sidmouth* said, he trusted their lordships, in coming to a decision upon the question then before them, would be guided, not by any views which the noble baron might consider as the only ones calculated to promote the interests of Ireland, but by those general and comprehensive principles which could alone be adopted with safety upon such a subject. He certainly did object to the motion of the noble marquis, and he objected to it, not because the present condition of Ireland was one which did not demand serious consideration, but because, if it were acceded to, it would not contribute to the accomplishment of the desired object. He would state further, that he opposed the present motion, not merely on account of the inconvenient delay which it would occasion, not on account of the trouble it would create, or the interruption to the regular parliamentary business, which, however, was not wholly to be disregarded, but more especially on the ground, that he conceived it could not be complied with, without reanimating, without exasperating party spirit in Ireland, without tearing open wounds which were just beginning to heal, and without aggravating those wounds which were still bleeding. It would be impossible to go into a committee, it would be impossible to hear witnesses at their bar, it would be impossible to probe the evils to their bottom, without exciting a mass of discontent in all quarters, which would only heighten and inflame the troubles which already unhappily existed. That was his opinion upon the subject; in consequence of that opinion he should feel it his duty to oppose the appointment of a committee, and he did not shrink from avowing it. Another objection which he felt to the motion of the noble marquis was, that a sufficient discrimination had not been made in the different natures and character and quality of the grievances complained of. Some of the noble lords who had spoken, seemed too much disposed to view all the grievances as permanent and fixed. He perfectly remembered when the noble baron who spoke last, recommended the union with Ireland, in a speech full of eloquence, full of persuasive energy, and urged as a reason for that measure, the necessity of introducing civilization into that country, the necessity of giving a stimulus to the national industry, of correcting the morals, of imparting knowledge, and alluring British capital there. Those were the evils, implied in the correctives, which then existed, and which, to a certain degree, still exist. There is still a want of civilization; there is still a want of industry, still a want of the general diffusion of knowledge. The evils were not all done away; and how, indeed, could they be done away in so short a period? It was impossible to expect it, even had their removal not been retarded by inevitable obstructions. It should be recollected what had been the situation of this country since the adoption of that measure. We had been engaged in active war for sixteen years; and what was the character of that war? He did not mean the character of the war merely since the rupture of the peace of Amiens, but since its first commencement in 1793. That war possessed a character, a nature, and a quality, peculiarly calculated to operate upon such a people as the Irish; a people more backward in point of information than could perhaps be found in any part of the civilised globe. They were, therefore, wholly exposed to the fatal influence of those pernicious doctrines which the folly and madness of the French revolution had generated. In addition to political dangers which might be apprehended from such circumstances, it was also to be remembered that the Irish were distracted and divided by religious differences.—No doubt the effects of that disastrous period were now much weakened; but was it not to be apprehended, that the embers might still remain, and might be kindled into a flame by the occurrence of particular events? He entreated their lordships, therefore, to bear in mind those circumstances, and some others connected with the situation of Ireland. They would reflect, that during that war, Ireland had been the scene of two rebellions, and two invasions from the enemy; and that it was ascertained that there existed a direct connexion and correspondence between the leaders of the rebellion and the government of France. Was it to be supposed that the ferment had wholly subsided? Certainly not. It had however begun to abate, and no doubt would continue to do so, if no unfavourable circumstance should arise to prevent it.—But there were also causes of recent date to which the present unsettled state of Ireland might be largely attributed. He alluded to the agricultural distress which was felt throughout that country, as it was in England. He did not mean to go into a particular statement of all those facts which proved, to demonstration the extent to which every article of agricultural produce in Ireland was depreciated, by the sudden diminution of demand and the increased supply. But it was obvious that those causes which had produced distress here, must have produced distress, discontent, and irritation, in Ireland, to a still greater degree. They had not there the same means of counteracting or enduring the distress; they had not the same extent of capital; nor had they the same means of providing employment by their manufactures for those who were suffering under the privations created by that distress. Hence arose, in a great degree, those miseries and calamities which every one deplored, and which every one must be anxious to relieve but which he did not think were likely to be relieved by the proposed inquiry. That inquiry he considered to be, not only unnecessary but dangerous.—With respect to the want of habits of industry among the lower classes in Ireland, and the want of education, there were remedies now in operation, which would probably remove both those complaints. And by what government were those remedies proposed? By the government of that noble lord who now under-rated the importance or the utility of education, as the means of ameliorating the condition of the Irish peasantry. In the course of last year, also, it should be remembered, that a measure was adopted, which was then condemned by the noble lords opposite, and by the country, though now he believed the country was willing to applaud its wisdom and policy, which was eminently favourable to the agricultural interests of Ireland.—The motion of the noble marquis called upon their lordships to go into a committee, for the purpose of inquiring, among other things, into the question of catholic emancipation; and the noble baron who spoke last, had told them, that unless that concession was at once made, as a preliminary measure, all other modes of conciliation would be vain and unavailing. He would ask their lordships, therefore, whether they were prepared to avow a change of opinion with respect to that question; and if they were not, they were then distinctly informed, that they might spare themselves the trouble of any further inquiry, for no good could be attained without adopting that at the very outset. But he must own he heard with no inconsiderable astonishment, the declaration of the noble baron, that no remedial measures could be pursued for the welfare and tranquillity of Ireland, till the catholic claims were conceded; for he remembered a period when the noble baron thought it wise and prudent to abstain altogether from touching upon that subject. The noble baron proclaimed to this country and to Ireland, that he did not desire the question to be agitated, until it could be accompanied by the wishes of the Protestants of Great Britain, and until there was a proof that other securities might be obtained. Was he prepared to say, that the veto would now be conceded? Was he prepared to say, that the requisite securities could now be obtained, or that the measure would now meet the approbation and concurrence of the Protestants of Great Britain? And yet, unless he had entirely changed his opinion, the noble baron must confess, that the Catholic question could not be carried at present, if he was not prepared to make those assertions.—The noble marquis who made the motion had ventured to state, that the difference which still subsisted between the Roman Catholics themselves, upon the question of conceding their claims, so far from being any obstacle to the success of the measure, were rather to be considered as a strong recommendation in their favour. It certainly seemed most extraordinary to him, that the unanimous concurrence of the Protestants of Great Britain should be regarded as an indispensable preliminary; that so much importance should be attached to that concurrence: but that it was of no consequence whatever to secure the unanimity of the catholics. There was a novelty in this kind of reasoning which he confessed he did not comprehend. The noble marquis, however, seemed to have forgotten that the experiment had actually been tried in the session before last, by persons, who, he believed, were most sincerely anxious to befriend the Catholics. They entirely lost sight of all the discords and bickerings among the Catholics, and entreated parliament to do the same: they pressed the measure forward upon its own broad and general principles; but the attempt failed. It was then contended that the discontents and irritation which prevailed in the catholic body, rendered it impossible to proceed; and yet they were now told, that without obtaining any securities, without any hope of the veto being conceded, without any indication of a disposition on the part of the Protestants of this country to support the measure, it was to be at once adopted as the only preliminary that could make any other concessions beneficial. He certainly did not conceive that such a mode was one which afforded any rational hope of conciliating the Catholics.—The next topic which had been adverted to was the great and important question of tithes, and he confessed that was a subject in which he sanguinely hoped some remedial measures might have been adopted; but, after having conversed with some of the most intelligent persons in this country and in Ireland, after having endeavoured to collect every opinion upon that most important point, he was convinced there existed so little reasonable ground for believing that any fair system of general commutation could be devised, that he did not think it advisable to submit a distinct measure to parliament upon the subject. The opinion which he then formed had since been confirmed, not only by the declarations of those who well understood the matter, but by the silence even of many, who, if there could have been a practicable measure discovered, would have been among the foremost to bring it forward. He understood a proposition upon the subject had been proposed in the other House of Parliament, but it was found inapplicable when examined, and the thing now slept, from a general conviction that it was a grievance to be lamented, indeed, but that it was also one for which no individual who had considered it, had been able to find a remedy. That even was the confession of the noble duke (of Bedford) who had presided over the government of Ireland; that also was the confession of many in both Houses; and for himself, he certainly had never met with one who, in his own mind, was satisfied as to the possibility of adopting a really practical remedy.—Another point to which the noble baron attached great importance in the course of his speech, related to the manner in which the high sheriffs were appointed in Ireland. He stated it as a distinctly admitted fact that the administration of justice in Ireland was radically corrupt; or, at least (which signified nearly the same thing), that there was corruption in the mode of nominating the high sheriffs. With respect to that subject, all he should say was, that from what he had heard about it, he thought it was one which well deserved the consideration of the legislature. The grand juries of Ireland formed another ground, which was assigned as a reason for going into the committee. The noble marquis, however, was probably aware, that the subject had been made matter of inquiry in the other House: a committee had been appointed to examine into it: that committee had reported, and their report was upon the table of that House. Their lordships might call for the report, and if it should not be thought sufficiently satisfactory, they could, of course, institute a further inquiry. He was equally disposed to admit, that that also was a fit subject for legislative interference. In short, he might say with regard to the general question of the state of Ireland, let the noble lords opposite specify distinctly the evils which required to be removed; let them come forward with their remedies, and then it would be seen whether the government was, or was not, unwilling to consider those remedies. A noble lord had said, in speaking of the troops to be employed in Ireland, that they were nearly double the amount of any army which had ever before been kept up in that country in a time of peace. He would state, however, that the 25,000 soldiers now proposed to be maintained for Ireland, were only the residue of an army of 42,000, which, in the very first year of peace, it was thought advisable thus to reduce. That force was not maintained in order to re-conquer Ireland, as had been unguardedly asserted; but to protect the peaceable and well-disposed inhabitants from outrage, plunder, and massacre, and to restore tranquillity in the disturbed districts. No one, who justly reflected upon all the circumstances of the case, would complain of the manner in which that force was to be employed; and he was sorry that so ill-advised an expression had been ventured upon with respect to it, when it was considered what might be the effect of such an erroneous notion if it once prevailed in Ireland.—It was too late, were he inclined, to enter into other topics. All he hoped was, that he had satisfied their lordships, that no indisposition existed on the part of his majesty's government to entertain the question proposed by the noble marquis, provided a special grievance were alleged, and provided such a proposition were made as could with propriety be discussed by parliament. It was on the conviction that the motion of the noble marquis, if adopted, would defeat the object which he had in view, that he felt it incumbent on him to give it his decided negative.

After a short reply from the marquis of Buckingham, the House divided:—

Not-Contents, Present, 68; Proxies, 69—137: Contents, Present, 26; Proxies, 41—67: majority against the motion, 70.

Adjourned at half-past two o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, April 2.

Saving Banks Bill.] Mr. *Rose* said, he was anxious to call the attention of the House to a subject upon which he had lately given notice, and which was one of very great importance to the public generally. The object of his motion was, to afford a certain degree of protection to the establishments called Banks for Savings. Many persons were not aware of the great advantages which have resulted from establishments of that sort in different parts of the country. They tended, in a remarkable and most beneficial manner, to encourage among the common people of all descriptions, a desire of saving from the earnings of their labour and industry, wherewith to secure them from the sudden reverses of misfortune. It had frequently been remarked, that hitherto the most ingenious men employed in different trades, were addicted to idleness and dissipation, because they had no means of depositing that portion of their earnings which they thus squandered away. It was quite clear that in large cities, artificers might often lay by considerable portions of their earnings, instead of which, for want of an adequate opportunity, they were wasted in extravagance and idleness, and the consequence was, that they did not work the whole of their time. There were instances where artificers earned from thirty to forty, fifty, sixty and even seventy shillings a week, and yet, in any case of illness or sudden distress, they were forced to resort to the parish for support. It would, perhaps, be said, that the plan of saving banks might do very well for artificers, in large cities and towns, and for domestic servants, but that they would be of very little use in the country, for those who were employed in agricultural labour. In reply to that, he need only refer to what had been done by the saving banks established at Bath, Edinburgh, and other places. The advantages, indeed, derived to the poorer classes in the country, were very great. It appeared, from tables to which he had formerly referred, that by a saving of only one shilling a week, begun in early life, a labourer in the country would be able to secure to himself the means of a comfortable establishment as he advanced in years. Early marriages had often been deprecated, among the poor, because they only tended to produce families without the means of maintaining them: but by this system, so small a sum as one shilling a week being put by, a man, when he attained the age of thirty, might establish himself and his family comfortably in a cottage of his own. In the capital, however, an artificer was better able to lay by twenty shillings a week than a day labourer in the country was able to lay by one. As a proof of the good results of these banks, he would mention to the House, that in the place which he represented, a labouring man who never earned more than ten shillings a week, had, by depositing a certain portion of his earnings, accumulated no less than 100*l.* by the time he was thirty-three years of age [Hear, hear!]. He had received a letter also yesterday, informing him that a similar establishment had taken place in the town of Hertford, and that in the course of one day no less a sum than 197*l.* had been deposited. He mentioned those circumstances, to induce gentlemen to exert themselves, and that they might not sit with their hands before them, believing that nothing could be done. He alluded more particularly to gentlemen who were at the head of manufacturing districts. They would find an eager disposition on the part of the people to avail themselves of such opportunities to save. The moral good to be expected from the diffusion of those banks, was great and obvious. They would gradually tend to revive in the lower classes, that decent spirit of independence, now almost extinct, which shrinks from accepting parochial relief. The poor man would learn to regard his own industry and labour as the source whence he was to derive temporary aid in the hour of sickness, or permanent support when the approaches of age should unfit him for active exertions. Together with those feelings of honourable confidence in their own means of subsistence, would be allied many domestic virtues, and they who now idly and profligately looked only to the parish for relief, would progressively become better men, and better subjects. They would regard their little property, the accumulation of their own industrious labour, with conscious pride and satisfaction, and scorn to be dependent upon the parish for that support which they could provide themselves.—He had hitherto argued the matter as applicable only to the poor: but it had its claims also upon the rich, for the poor-rates of the country would diminish in proportion as there were fewer persons to claim them. The progressive increase of the charge for the poor was truly alarming. In 1778, the sum raised for that purpose, was 1,800,000*l.*, last year it amounted to very nearly six millions sterling. The poor-rates had grown to that immense charge, though he believed it was generally admitted, that the poor were no better managed now than formerly. In moving for leave to bring in the bill, he must say, that he was not prepared to bring it in at present; his reason for making the motion was because he had received numerous applications from different parts of the country, to know whether parliament meant to do any thing at all. With respect to the object of the bill, it would at least propose to grant the same as had been granted to the friendly societies. He had applied to his right hon. friend the chancellor of the exchequer, who had expressed his willingness to go that length. He (Mr. Rose) thought however, that a greater degree of encouragement and protection might be given, not only without any danger, but on the contrary with great advantage. He should now move, "That leave be given to bring in a bill for protecting of Banks for Savings."

Mr. *Thompson* expressed his warmest approbation of the proposed measure of the right hon. gentleman. He thought it was calculated to do as much service to the poor, as a former measure of the same right hon. gentleman, for legalizing benefit societies. They had been of great use in many parts of the country, and though in some cases abused, he believed, yet he had never known any instances, and he lived in a place where there were not less than fifty or sixty of them. With respect to saving banks, he knew that in Yorkshire there was a great desire to establish them, but they were a little afraid of doing so, from their apparent complexity. He would recommend, therefore, to the right hon. gentleman, to make the provisions of his bill as simple as possible, and as public as possible, even before the bill passed. He was sure that in many of the manufacturing districts, the workmen might save ten shillings a week, out of their earnings, which would be a comfortable resource for themselves and their families. At least there would be no excuse for soliciting parochial relief, when an opportunity existed, of which they might avail themselves for doing without it.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* thought it unnecessary to say one word in favour of a proposal which he was confident must meet the wishes and be congenial to the feelings of every member of that House. Experience had indubitably shown that nothing tended more to the independence of the poor than supporting themselves by their own exertions. To a well constituted and liberal mind no event could give more satisfaction than the enlightening of the ignorant. Men once enlightened knew the value of their privileges, and learned how to use them. He particularly hailed the institution of saving banks, as a place where the rich and the poor met together, and mutually combined in promoting, under Divine protection, their natural rights. There, forgetful of those petty distinctions which temporary circumstances had created, they met as brethren, each to do his duty to his neighbour. On these, and on many other grounds, he supported the measure of his right hon. friend.

Mr. *Rose*, in reference to what had fallen from an hon. gentleman opposite, stated, that the members of the benefit societies had increased to 700,000 in England, and 60,000 in Ireland.

Sir *J. Newport* hoped the right hon. gentleman would make the bill applicable to both countries. He was particularly happy in saying that the societies had been very useful in Ireland, and would, he trusted, continue long to be the source of much good to the whole empire.

Leave was given to bring in the bill.

CONTINGENT CHARGES OF THE TREASURY.] Sir John Newport having moved, "That the account showing the particulars of the sum expended in the year 1815, under the head of Contingent Charges by the Lords of the Treasury," be printed,

Mr. *Tierney* said, he should not fulfil his duty, both to parliament and to the country, if he did not call the attention of the House to some of the items which that paper presented. It had already appeared that the increase in the salaries of the department of the treasury was 10,000*l.* in the present year. It now came out that the salary of Mr. Harrison, assistant secretary to the treasury, had been raised from 3,000*l.* to 3,500*l.* a year. It was impossible, in mentioning the name of that gentleman, not to express the fullest confidence in his integrity, and the greatest admiration of his activity and his talents; but the interests of the public were not to be forgotten. Mr. Harrison had taken his present situation at a salary of 2,000*l.* a year. As he had given up his profession in order to occupy this office, a compensation of 500*l.* at one time, and 500*l.* more at another, had been added to his salary, making it 3,000*l.* per annum. Now, be the abilities of any man what they might, he did not understand how 3,000*l.* a year could not prove a sufficient remuneration for any duties, especially when the situation which he occupied was one from which he could not be removed by any change of administration. Last year, a minute of the treasury had increased Mr. Harrison 500*l.* a year more. He did not blame him for taking that increase; he only blamed those who had granted it, for he considered him to have been remunerated in a manner which the circumstances of the country did not justify. The chief secretaries themselves had only 4,000*l.* a year. But this was not all. There was in one line for the meritorious services of Mr. Harrison, a gross sum of 5,000*l.* He knew that for particular services boons had been bestowed at different times upon meritorious individuals. But when the lords of the treasury took on themselves, besides increasing the salary of Mr. Harrison 500*l.*, to make him a present of 5,000*l.*, where could it be supposed they would stop [Hear, hear!]? The contingent fund for this year amounted to 15,000*l.*, and he trusted the House would take an opportunity of scrutinizing into all its items. He understood that, besides the regular duties of his office, Mr. Harrison had been employed in other important transactions, in which a man of trust and abilities was required; and he had no doubt that he had discharged the most difficult occupations in the most distinguished manner. But there was no decency in this distribution of public money. If he had not moved for the detailed accounts of the contingencies, this case would not have been discovered. Granting the highest merits to Mr. Harrison, yet he should have failed in the execution of his duty, had he not exposed this secret transaction. He had no inclination to make any motion on the subject. If he moved any thing, it could only be the impeachment of ministers; but he trusted that those gentlemen unconnected with party who had received from their constituents recommendations to insist on all possible economy and retrenchment, would take it up [Here the chancellor of the exchequer smiled]. The right hon. gentleman might have spared this mirth at his own detection. He smiled at the idea of impeachment, but he (Mr. T.) hoped the subject would be brought forward, and by one of those gentlemen, in a way that could not be charged with party motives.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* thought that it would have become the right hon. gentleman as well to have allowed the House to consider the papers on the table before he had made any remarks on those transactions which could not otherwise be understood. He had called it a secret transaction, but the return had been made in the usual form. The accounts of contingencies laid from year to year before the House, and containing a variety of grants of this nature, were always done in that manner, and any explanation was given, or more detailed information produced, upon any point on which it might be required. The right hon. gentleman had noticed his surprise that he should wish an impeachment to be moved against his majesty's ministers by others. Such a proposal could not come from a better quarter than that of the right hon. member himself; and if he was to fall, he had rather fall by him than by a less powerful hand. He should now take a short view of Mr. Harrison's career. He had been appointed by Mr. Pitt, in 1805, to his present situation, with a salary of 2,000*l.* a year, and an eventual increase of 500*l.* after five years service, being then rising in his profession, the law, and in circumstances which rendered his acceptance of office a sacrifice. In 1807, in consequence of the approbation expressed by lord Melville of his services, lord Grenville had anticipated the appointed time, and granted him the increase of 500*l.* a year. In 1809, the treasury took into consideration the large increase in the business of his office. The number of papers to be registered, which, in 1805, amounted only to 7,000, was, in 1809, 15,000. They considered him therefore entitled to a further increase, and added 500*l.* to his salary, thus making it 3,000*l.* per annum. He conceded that it was an ample salary; but from the commencement of the war in the peninsula, Mr. Harrison had been engaged in extra-official duties. Under the duke of Portland and Mr. Perceval he had been charged with the correspondence of the army, and for his great additional services had received no remuneration until the year 1814. He had then applied to the earl of Liverpool to have his services taken into consideration, and, after much deliberation, it had been resolved, with a view to avoid a permanent increase of salary, that a grant of money would be the best means of rewarding the services of that gentleman—5,000*l.* were then bestowed as a retrospective grant, and a prospective increase of 500*l.* to his salary, so long as his extra services should continue. The augmentation was, therefore, in fact, temporary. Whenever the House should enter more fully into this business, he should be prepared to show many precedents for this grant, some for smaller and some for larger sums. In the stamp office 10,000*l.* had been granted from contingencies to Mr. Campbell for his services. The principle appeared to be recognised by the act of 1810, which provided that no increase of allowance should take place in any department without the consent of three lords of the treasury. Surely the lords of the treasury retained their power in their own office. There could be no doubt of the legality of the transaction. He should be ready at a future time to enter more at length into the subject, convinced that his own character and the character of the treasury in this transaction stood on strong grounds.

Mr. *Tierney*, in order to obviate the reproach which the chancellor of the exchequer had cast upon him, of discussing the question before the House, had had time to consider the papers produced on the subject, and to show that he would take no unfair advantage, requested that they should be read by the clerk of the House.—The papers having accordingly been read,

Mr. *Methuen* asked whether, in consequence of Mr. Harrison's illness, any increase of salary had been given to any other persons in the office for their additional labour?

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* replied, that the papers which had just been read must have apprized the hon. gentleman that some compensation had been made to one or two clerks, but not to any considerable amount.

Mr. *Wynn* concurred in the compliment paid to Mr. Harrison's character, but was glad the subject had come before the public, as it had developed a system big with the most ruinous consequences to the country. He would never hesitate to grant a man the proper reward due to his labour, but he thought when a man in office had 3,000*l.* a year, the public were entitled to all his labour, his assiduity, his talents, and his time [Hear, hear!]. The chancellor of the exchequer had stated the case of Mr. Campbell as a precedent, but the sum of 10,000*l.* had been granted to Mr. Campbell in consequence of his having augmented the revenue. This was, however, a matter of little moment, for the granting of that sum was in itself a very bad act, and if allowed to pass without notice, might be in the end extremely prejudicial. The reason why, in general, contingencies were not more narrowly examined than they really were, arose from their being composed of small items, and from the very great trouble which their perusal would occasion. He trusted parliament in this case would do their duty, and would not allow such a gross attempt to deceive them, and to conceal the transactions of ministers, to pass with impunity. He intended to move for the particulars of the contingencies for the last ten years, to see what else had been done of this description.

Lord *Castlereagh* was not surprised that the present grant should attract attention, as its amount was considerable. All he wished was, that the House should not fancy that there was any intention on the part of his majesty's ministers to conceal it. It had been inserted as usual in the contingencies. That was the regular course. Their amount being thus swelled up would naturally excite attention, and honourable members would move for details, which would then be produced. There was no attempt at concealment in this. The gratuities had been granted to meritorious officers under the Crown, and there were two or three instances of officers of the customs whom it had been deemed proper thus to reward. Such powers were vested in the treasury, and as the law now stood there was no power which could have a control over it. Nothing had been done which denoted any disposition to secresy, and when ministers should have an opportunity of stating the extraordinary labours of the gentleman in question, he trusted the House would consider that this discretion had not been improperly exercised, and that there could not have been any improper motive for making this compensation to Mr. Harrison for his most arduous and eminent services.

Mr. *J. P. Grant* must say, that though there was no imputation against the noble lord or the right hon. gentleman of any desire to conceal this transaction, yet there appeared no very great wish that it should attract attention; for it was one which, if it had come under the knowledge of parliament, would have been extremely likely to attract their notice. Nobody was more inclined to acknowledge the justice of rewarding public servants than himself; but it was improper and mischievous that one public servant should be selected to receive a reward which it was impossible to bestow in a relative proportion on others; and he begged gentlemen to consider what the payment of a large sum down was, and how much more serious to the public than a moderate increase of salaries. He was sure that if proceedings of this nature were the common practice of that board, they could not be prevented, unless brought in time before the cognizance of parliament.

Mr. *Ponsonby* said, it was the general understanding that these powers were not given to the treasury for the purpose of making large grants, but for bestowing small grants on clerks, as a compensation for extra services. It was never understood that the treasury should make such large grants as the House now heard of, and he would say it was the duty of the party who made them to have apprized parliament that they were intended to be made, and to have taken the opinion of the House upon them. He would not believe that, but for this discussion gentlemen would ever have heard of the 10,000*l.* till the 5,000*l.* in question had brought it to light. He would contend that it was a breach of duty in ministers not to have apprized the House of this grant, that inquiry might have been made as to its propriety.

The motion was agreed to. Mr. Wynn then moved, "That there be laid before this House, an account showing the particulars of the sum expended during the last ten years, under the head of contingent charges in the departments of the treasury, secretaries of state, admiralty, navy office, navy pay office, victualling office, customs, excise, tax, and stamp offices, army pay office, war office, and ordnance; distinguishing all sums above 200*l.*"—Ordered.

Local Poor Acts.] Sir *Robert Heron* rose to move for leave to bring in a bill to repeal certain clauses in the local acts, for the maintenance and management of the poor. He observed that he was induced to submit this motion to the House, in consequence of the hardships and grievances to which the poor were subject under the Lincoln poor bill. These hardships, he apprehended, were experienced in a degree equally objectionable under many other local bills, and therefore it was that he was desirous the bill which he should have the honour of introducing, should be applicable to all. The first objection which he had to the Lincoln poor bill was, that it permitted parishes which were twenty miles distant from each other, to join for the maintenance of their poor, whereby those unfortunate persons who were reduced by distress to seek relief from their parish, were often sent far distant from those friends by whose assistance their calamities might have been in a great measure softened. In fact, they were deprived of whatever little comfort their hopeless situation was capable of affording. The general poor law bill only permitted such junctions as these to take place where the parishes were situated within ten miles of each other. This, however, was not the only evil of which he had to complain, for by this act the most extravagant power was given to the directors and guardians of the poor; for, independent of having it in their power to send all persons to the work-house who might apply for relief, they also had the power of apprehending those who were incompetent to support their families, and sending them to the same place, where they might keep them as long as they pleased. It was at their option, in truth, to imprison them in this way for life, and where a child had once received the assistance of the parish, they assumed to themselves, ever after, the right of disposing of that child as they thought proper, either by keeping it in the work-house, selling it, or apprenticing it to the governor, or any other person whom they might select, for fourteen years; in short, there was no limit to the power which this act gave to these persons. He did not wish to take up the time of the House by entering more minutely into the further abuses which were thus sanctioned, yet he thought he should not be discharging his duty if he did not mention some other instances which had come to his knowledge. Among others, the directors of the poor, by this bill, had the power of letting out those unfortunate people as day labourers, to whom they thought proper. They had likewise authority to inflict corporal punishment to any extent; and this act had existed in full force for twenty years. Having thus stated the power which the act gave, he should now proceed to state the manner in which that power had been exercised. He had had the curiosity to visit the workhouse in his neighbourhood, with the view of ascertaining the manner in which the poor were treated. He had nothing to say against the general arrangements; the place was extremely clean and airy, and no particular complaint was to be made; but he did find a sort of harsh rule, which he conceived to be more than necessary. He saw, however, a thing which struck him with horror: he saw three cells, with iron staples fixed to the walls, for the purpose of confining human beings in chains [Hear, hear!]; and such were not persons who were insane, but those whose only crime was poverty, and their offences those misdemeanors which always occurred in such receptacles of misery. On inquiring whether any instances had occurred of persons being condemned to these cells by the self-elected judges, he learned that a Chelsea pensioner, 70 years of age, and totally blind, had been immured and chained, because, on receiving his pension, he had got drunk! He was not contending that discipline and punishment were not sometimes necessary in such places; but he would leave it to the House to say, whether the punishment ought to be of such a nature as he had described. Another instance was that of a young girl, who had been chained to the wall with a chain that weighed 28lb. with which she escaped, and fled to a humane person who took the chain off and weighed it. The reason assigned for her confinement was, that she was infected with a disorder, which it was feared she would communicate to others. Here again he could not but observe, that the cell itself would have answered every purpose, without the torturing addition of the chains [Hear!]. Having thus, as he conceived, stated good grounds for the amendment of the local poor laws, he should conclude by moving, "That leave be given to bring in a bill to repeal certain provisions in Local acts for the maintenance and management of the Poor."

Mr. *Rose* said, he should not object to the motion, but he must state, that when the bill in question was before the House, it had his most hearty concurrence. It was not always that the same rule would apply to great cities as would to particular parishes. What the hon. baronet had stated, certainly made out an extremely strong case, which perfectly justified the interference of the House; for it appeared that, in this instance, the overseers had a power given to them which was greater than what was vested in the judges of the land, and he doubted the propriety of giving them the right of using any arbitrary power, except in extreme cases of delinquency. But he hoped the hon. baronet had not in view to repeal the general clauses of the bill, which certainly were beneficial. To authorize any departure from the principle of the bill, the case ought to be made extremely clear. Such power as had been described, however, ought not to be given to overseers.

Sir *Robert Heron* said, he had no intention whatever of altering the general poor laws; his object was to amend the local acts on this subject. The bill he should introduce was intended, first, to deprive the directors of the poor of the power of confining persons in the workhouse who were not actually chargeable on the parish; secondly, to repeal the clause which gave them the power of disposing of children as they thought proper, who had once received parish relief; thirdly, to prevent the junction of parishes situated more than ten miles from each other; fourthly, to allow parishes which had joined to separate, upon six months notice; and lastly, to prevent persons of sane mind from being confined in chains.

Mr. *Lockhart* said, the facts that had been stated by the hon. baronet were certainly extremely revolting, but he hoped the general principle of the poor bill would be left untouched. The impression that ought to prevail was, that it would be dangerous to overturn the principles of a measure which had been in operation for three or four hundred years. But the poor-rates was a subject that demanded the most serious consideration at the present time, when they had increased to such an enormous amount, as to absorb one-third of the whole rental of the kingdom. They were now about eight millions annually, and the whole rental did not exceed 24 millions. The system of giving relief to every person, merely because he was poor, was expressly contrary to the law of nature and the law of God, which declares, that each individual shall earn his bread by the sweat of his brow; and it was impossible that mankind could be maintained upon any other principle. But our system was the worst species of Agrarian law, which caused a man to have an interest in enjoying the fruit of the land, but no interest in the labour that produced it; and it was singular, that in no other country was this system adopted. The cause why so many unhappy people were dragged to workhouses and immured was, our having extended our principle of relief to all persons who are poor. But we should not be able to continue this principle long; for the time must come when every healthy person must live by the produce of his own labour. The evil was coming rapidly upon us, and he would say, that it ought to suggest the necessity of reviewing the system of the poor laws altogether; for it was utterly impossible that we could, by taxation or any other means, provide for the increasing amount of rates which would be required while this system prevailed, and from which, he really thought, the greatest danger threatened the community.

Sir *Samuel Romilly* said, the evil which the hon. baronet sought to correct was, that the criminal law should not be applied to the unprotected poor, at the pleasure of persons at the head of parishes. They had the greatest temptations, in many instances, to exceed the powers given them by law, and the poor wretches could only bring their action for false imprisonment, which, it must be seen, it was impossible for any of them to do. All the transactions that had been related as having occurred in the poor-house of Lincoln, were in direct violation of the act which was called Mr. Kenrick's act. Sir Samuel descanted on these abuses, and declared his opinion, that nothing was more abhorrent than that the children of the poor should be apprenticed in the workhouse for fourteen years, and made the slaves of the governors. Another horrible circumstance was, the farming of the labour of the poor, which gentlemen who had read the report on the mendicity committee, would understand was quite different from farming them out by the London parishes, to be maintained; this was quite different from farming them out to work like slaves. He entreated the House to recollect that they were legislating for poor people, who had no friends in the world, and who could not possibly obtain justice, unless at their hands. The object of the bill was only to correct abuses; but he hoped it would go to correct them wherever they could by any possibility be discovered; and he trusted the House would pay every attention to it as it passed before them, and make the violation of the law towards the poor in future a punishable misdemeanor.

Sir Egerton Brydges also supported the motion. After which leave was given to bring in the bill. Sir Robert Heron afterwards presented the bill, which was read a first time.

WINE TRADE.] Mr. Sharp presented a petition from a number of importers of and dealers in foreign wines, describing the distressed state of the trade, and praying that parliament would be pleased to take their case into serious consideration. On the motion that the petition should lie on the table,

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* shortly stated the circumstances which had attended a conference that he had had with a deputation from the petitioners, and the reasons which had induced him to declare, that in the present situation of the country, he could not listen to any proposition for reducing so important a branch of the revenue.

The petition was ordered to lie on the table.

REMISSION OF EXCISE PROSECUTIONS.] On the motion of Mr. Brougham, the act of the 54th of the King, c. 171, "to empower the commissioners of his majesty's treasury to restore seizures, or remit or mitigate fines, penalties, or forfeitures incurred concerning any laws relating to the customs or excise, or navigation and trade, of Great Britain," was read. After which,

Mr. *Brougham* rose, in pursuance of the notice which he had some time ago given, to solicit the attention of the House to a subject which, in his opinion, amply deserved the most serious consideration of every man who entertained a due regard for the commercial, the financial, or (which was by far the most important) the constitutional institutions of his country. When this subject was first mentioned, an opportunity had not been afforded of explaining the change which two years ago had been effected in the law as it respected the revenue. To render the statements which he was about to make intelligible, he must trouble the House with a few words at the outset, explanatory of the state of the law before and since the change occasioned by the statute which had just been entered by the clerk as having been read. When he reminded the House of the vast extent of the revenue, and particularly of those two great branches of it, the customs and the excise—when the House kept in their eye the fact that the permanent revenue, that which existed in peace, exceeded 33 millions—when they reflected that to this was added in time of war 10 millions more from the war duties—when they contemplated the enormous amount of the whole, 43 millions—he was sure he need not say a word more to convince them of the infinite importance that ought to attach to all the branches of the law which related to the collection and to the punishment of the evasion of the duties, by which a sum of such magnitude was made up. The House must be well aware, that in former times the whole authority of collecting this revenue was vested in the two great boards of customs and excise. The commissioners of customs and excise, although appointed by the Crown, held their offices during life or good behaviour. They were formerly, as they were at present, taken from that independent class of the community, whose liberal endowments and honourable habits afforded a fair presumption that certain discretionary powers with respect to this important subject of the revenue, might be left in their hands, not only with safety, but with advantage to the public interest. One of the most momentous of those powers was, the control entrusted to them over the prosecutions for penalties incurred by the violation of the revenue laws. The revenue was so enormous, that it was almost impossible to form an idea of the immense mass of business transacted in that particular. The time of the commissioners had been almost entirely occupied with considerations of that nature. He was utterly unable to give the House a notion of the number of cases of violation of the revenue laws brought into the court, of the number in which convictions had been the result, and of the number in which proceedings had been stayed. But when it was considered that a mere abstract of the revenue laws furnished matter for a large volume—that even a mere index of those laws filled a volume of no small bulk—that the laws themselves (speaking within compass) occupied three or four volumes of the statute books—when this was considered, and when the vast variety of commodities to which those laws applied was also considered, it would be sufficient to prove how vast must be the mass of business which the boards of customs and excise must have had to get through in the discharge of that particular duty to which he had referred.

In the hands of those boards, and (by a particular statute) in the hands of the attorney-general used in former times to be lodged the power of commencing of, carrying on, and of staying (as it was termed) proceedings in the prosecution of offences against the revenue laws. By different statutes, which he would not specify, because he was anxious to avoid any thing like a legal detail, a further power had been confided to those authorities—namely, the power of restoring goods and vessels which had been seized, or which had become forfeit. This power, however, was subject to certain limitations. It could only be exercised before judgment, while the proceedings were yet pending. Another limitation still more material was, that it could only be exercised in cases in which the commissioners and the law officers of the Crown were convinced that there had been no fraudulent intention; but that the person who had contravened the revenue law had done so by mistake, and not by design. The last limitation to the power was, that it was not to be exercised in breaches of the navigation laws. The House would observe the extreme importance of the limitations which he had just described. The first, preventing the restoration of goods, or the remission of penalties after the cause had been tried, and judgment had been given for the Crown. The second, limiting the restoration of goods, and the remission of penalties to those cases in which there was good reason to believe that no fraud was intended, but that the party offending had unintentionally fallen into one of those little traps into which, in the multiplicity of revenue regulations, the fairest dealer might inadvertently be betrayed. The last limitation, the most important limitation, the limitation to which on the present occasion he wished the attention of the House to be particularly directed, was, that these powers of remission, limited to mesne proceedings, and to transactions which were *bona fide* mistakes and not frauds, were confined to the boards of customs and excise, and to the law officers of the Crown, but chiefly to the former. These powers, so extensive, operating on almost all the traders of the empire, going into all the minute questions of the revenue—these powers it had been thought might be safely lodged in the hands of men chosen from the class which he had already described, liberal, respectable, and above all unconnected with his majesty's government, independent on any changes that might take place in the administration; and, being appointed for life, free from all political influence.

In this state stood the law on this subject, until the month of July 1814, when it pleased the two Houses of Parliament to pass an act which speedily received the royal assent. By this act, so exceedingly concise, that it did not occupy half a page of the volume on the table, a change the most important that had ever been made by one statute in the laws and constitution of the country, was suddenly, and (as he was prepared to demonstrate) in the dark carried into effect. The first change which this new act occasioned was that it swept away the first limitation of power which he had described. Goods might be restored, and penalties might be remitted, after judgment had been given in a court of record in favour of the Crown. It next swept away that limitation which prohibited the restoration or the remission, except in cases in which the board or the law officers were satisfied that there had been no fraudulent intention. Lastly (and to that particular his observations on the present occasion would peculiarly apply), it removed that greatest and most important limitation, the existence of which alone rendered safe the existence of the power of restoration and remission. By the act of 1814, the whole of the jurisdiction in these cases, the power of commencing, of continuing and of staying proceedings, the restoration of goods seized, and the remission of penalties forfeited either before or after conviction—in short, the whole dispensing power in all matters relating to a revenue of 43 millions was transferred from the permanent, from the unministerial, from the unpolitical hands in which it had until that period been placed, to the hands of the lords commissioners of his majesty's treasury!—If any one in after times, casting back an eye towards the period to which he had just alluded, and noticing the extraordinary change which had suddenly taken place in the revenue laws, and in the principle of the execution of the dispensing power connected with them—a principle which, if parliament did not interfere, would speedily attain to a more alarming height in practice than it had yet done, alarming as was its present progress—if any such observer, struck with the magnitude of the alteration, should take a retrospective view of the occurrences of the time when it was effected, he would naturally expect to find that this revolution in laws so essential to the welfare of the country had experienced in parliament consideration proportioned to the magnitude and importance of the proposition. He would look to those ordinary depositories of parliamentary information to which historians, and all who had not access to parliament itself must have recourse on such occasions; and he would endeavour to find in the Parliamentary Debates of the summer of 1814 some traces of that elaborate, that legal, and that constitutional discussion to which so great a proposed change in the laws must, in his opinion, have given birth. He would consult them in vain. In vain would he search through the whole of the proceedings of that period. Not a tittle of information would he obtain. Not a single word would he find recorded as having been uttered on the subject of this momentous alteration. Astonished at this, he would suspect some mistake—he would suspect that by some extraordinary exercise of the common law, overruling the statutes of the realm, this change had been effected. He would doubt if any act had really passed on the subject. But on consulting the votes of the House he would see the history of the transaction. And what did the House think was that history? On examining the votes, he found that on the 19th of July the bill was proposed. It was proposed at the end of a long and laborious session—on a night when various proceedings had taken place in the House, and among others, a debate of considerable length. It was recorded in the votes that the House sat till after twelve; that after that hour a great deal of business, amounting to no less than 25 distinct heads (besides others postponed) was done: many bills, some of them affecting the property, some probably the lives of his majesty's subjects, went through different stages at this late hour, and towards the end of the sitting—about two o'clock, or nearer two than one—he found it entered, that leave was given to bring in a bill, which bill turned out to be the identical measure, to the nature of which he now wished to call the attention of the House. Not a word had been said—no explanation was given. The House—if House it could be called, in which, instead of forty members, there were in all probability not above four—was entirely taken by surprise. Such as it was, however, in utter ignorance of the tendency of the measure—at such a period of such a session—was leave given to introduce this bill. In the course of two or three days, the bill was read a second time; it was speedily committed, and on the 20th of July it was read a third time, and passed; and on the 30th, having gone through the House of Lords, it received the royal assent. So great was the hurry with which the bill went through parliament, that he doubted whether it had even been printed. Such was the history of this extraordinary and almost universal change in the administration of the revenue.

The remark which must naturally strike all who had attended to this history was, that a power thus suddenly transferred to the lords commissioners of his majesty's treasury—a power almost boundless in its extent—a power highly important to the commerce and finances of the country, and still more to the rights of the subjects —a power which, so placed, became most critical and delicate in its nature.—It must naturally strike every impartial person that cases would be apt to arise in which that power would be abused. He had no doubt, however, that if at the time of passing the act, any one had risen and objected to the transfer of this authority, on the ground that it would make almost every merchant and manufacturer in England become several times in the year a suitor at the door of the treasury; and that it might tempt his majesty's ministers to abuse the trust reposed in them, he would have been laughed to scorn by the right hon. gentleman opposite; who would have asked if the House conceived it possible for such corruption to exist in the government? It so happened, nevertheless, that the papers now on the table of the House substantiated a case of repeated abuse of the power thus lodged in fresh hands; and unless the House meant to declare that they would no longer inquire into the exercise of any power vested in government, but that they would take it for granted such power was rightly exercised, they could not refuse to accede to one of his motions, which was, for a minute and rigorous examination into the way in which the power in question had been exercised. Again, if the House were not determined to be deaf to the public voice, or to be blind to the papers on the table, they must allow that at least one case of gross abuse was established, which it was impossible to explain away; and in that event they must accede to another of his motions, which was to express an opinion on the conduct of government on that individual case.

He was unwilling to trespass on the time of the House, but it was necessary shortly to remind them, that independently of that case to which he had just alluded, there were several others, which although not so full of abuse, yet exhibited great malversation. The first of these cases was that of Mr. Davie, a common brewer, of Lyme-Regis. This Mr. Davie had incurred penalties under the excise laws, to a large amount. On proceedings being taken against him, a verdict, on the 4th of June, was obtained, probably mitigated by consent, for 400*l*. The first attempt made by Mr. Davie to obtain a remission of this penalty was by a memorial presented to the treasury on the 13th of June, 1814. This memorial was backed by a letter to one of the secretaries of the treasury, a right hon. gentleman opposite (Mr. Arbuthnot), from a noble lord, a member of the other House of Parliament. This letter was as follows:—

"Dear Arbuthnot; I have received the inclosed letter from Mr. Davie of Lyme; hoping that the circumstance that he states may be attended to, and that his case may be fully and fairly laid before the lords of the treasury when they give their judgment upon it. I am, yours, very sincerely—WESTMORLAND.—Aug. 18, 1814."

He (Mr. Brougham) certainly admitted that there were no grounds in this letter for asserting that the noble lord was rash enough to apply for favour towards Mr. Davie on the reasons stated in the memorial. The noble lord (for he was desirous not to overstate the case) merely desired that the attention of the lords of the treasury might be directed to the subject. The consequence of this application was, that the lords of the treasury referred the whole matter to the board of excise, to consider and report thereon. Of the favour thus conferred on him, Mr. Davie was duly sensible, for in a letter immediately afterwards he expressed his sense of his obligation to the noble lord in the following words:—"I am exceedingly obliged by your lordship's kindness;" and in another letter, dated Aug. 15, he said, "I should esteem it as the greatest favour if your lordship will mention this circumstance to either of the lords of the treasury before their decision is passed upon the memorial, and your lordship's influence" (supposing with the ignorance and simplicity of the country people on such occasions, that undue influence was sometimes exercised in the various public departments) "will have great weight, and will be most gratefully acknowledged by my father and family." Although the explanation might elucidate this transaction, he (Mr. Brougham) felt that he was not at liberty to state the connexion that subsisted between the noble earl and the borough of Lyme Regis. Several other memorials were presented by Mr. Davie, and referred from time to time by the lords of the treasury to the board of excise. The report of the board was communicated to Mr. Davie, who furnished the materials for replying to it, paragraph by paragraph. Finding, however, that his affair did not go on so well as he expected, Mr. Davie (being, as he before observed, one of those simple ignorant beings who believed in the existence of undue influence) thought it just as well to have two strings to his bow, and therefore applied to the member for the county, Mr. Morton Pitt, through the medium of a Mr. Fisher, an attorney, whose letter, with a fresh memorial on the part of Mr. Davie, was transmitted by Mr. Pitt to Mr. Lushington with the following note, which showed that he had interposed on the subject before:—

"My dear Sir; I forgot before I left London to send you the two enclosed papers, which I mentioned to you one night coming out of the House of Commons. The writer of the letter, Mr. Fisher, is a most respectable solicitor in Lyme. Yours, most truly—W. M. PITT.—Dec. 28, 1814."

After this came another letter of acknowledgment from Mr. Davie to the noble lord, the concluding paragraph of which ran thus:—"Your lordship's interest and influence on our behalf will most deeply engage the warmest gratitude of my father, and of your lordship's most obliged and very humble servant—J. S. DAVIE."

On a further reference to these papers to the board of excise a final report was made by that board, adverse to Mr. Davie's wishes. With that decision the lords of the treasury had complied. The board refuted all the arguments in Mr. Davie's memorial, declaring also, that all the representations which had been made in his favour were unfounded, and expressed their hope that the judgment which had been given against him would not be set aside upon any ex-parte or extra-judicial proceeding. The report concluded by saying—"We shall think it our duty to proceed in due course of law, unless, as we trust will not be the case, we should receive your lordships positive orders to forbear." The lords of the treasury at length submitted, after having thus, at four several times, referred the consideration of the subject to the board of excise, notwithstanding the unequivocal opinion which they had received from that board in the first instance, and notwithstanding the decision of the court of exchequer. The result had been neither more not less than a most substantial advantage to Mr. Davie. For, in consequence of the delays arising from the interference in his favour by the noble earl and by Mr. Morton Pitt—the first his friend in the borough of Lyme, the second the member for the county of Dorset, in which the borough of Lyme was situated. Mr. Davie obtained, in the first instance, a delay of eleven months, during which time the proceedings against him were stayed; and, ultimately, when the lords of the treasury refused to comply with his prayer totally to remit the penalties which he had incurred, that refusal, with a view to render it less galling, was accompanied with another delay of two months, in order to enable him to pay the penalties with more facility. Next to an absolute remission, that delay was the greatest favour that Mr. Davie could receive; and the whole detail of the transaction bore him (Mr. Brougham) out in the assertion, that that favour Mr. Davie would not have experienced, had he not, to use a vulgar expression—"had a friend at court."

The next case to which he should advert, was that of Mr. John Abbott, common brewer, of Canterbury. It appeared that Mr. Abbott had been engaged as a brewer for nearly thirty years, and that about two years ago a prosecution was commenced by the board of excise against him, for having mixed vitriol, coculus indigo, grains of paradise, guinea pepper, and other deleterious materials in the beer which he brewed, a large quantity of those poisonous articles having been found on his premises. It was known to the House that a more deleterious ingredient could not be used in any liquor than vitriol, a very small portion of which would be sufficient to poison a strong man, and though the quantity mixed in a large proportion of beer, might not be sufficient immediately to destroy life, yet it was evident that the constant drinking of a liquor, in which even so small a portion of it was used as to give it that particular taste which it was intended to give, would be extremely prejudicial to health. It was not like quashia and some other ingredients which were frequently mixed in porter, it was corrosive in its nature, and might subject the unhappy man who was in the habit of drinking the liquor in which it was mixed, to painful and lingering diseases, which would only terminate with his life [Hear, hear!]. He did not mean to say that it was the intention of Mr. Abbott to produce any bad effects by the mixture of this article in his beer, or that he thought it could produce that effect which he had described. He believed Mr. Abbott to be a man of a very good character, one who would not wilfully give such a deleterious mixture to the public. To suppose that he would wilfully consent to this would be to charge him with a felony. But he wished particularly to call the attention of the House to what had been stated by Mr. Abbott, in the memorial which he sent to the treasury in his defence. In this memorial he stated, that he did not know of any such ingredients having been put in his beer. Though he had been in the trade for 28 years, he did not know of what materials his porter was made. He stated, that not having been brought up to trade or business of any sort or kind whatsoever, he was totally ignorant of the business in which he had been so long engaged. He was, therefore, obliged to depend upon the skill and information of others in conducting his business. Though he had formerly been a landed gentleman—though he had lived in respectable society, and had been well enough brought up, for any thing known to the contrary—yet, as he had never been at a university, he had not learned how to make ale [A laugh]. From this cause he remained ignorant of the existence of the nature and the use of the destructive ingredients mixed with his liquor, or lying about his premises. He acknowledged that there was found about his brewery one pound of a substance which was called cow-powder. This cow-powder remained under the care of one Croaker, a confidential servant, who administered as need required, to the cow or the porter. The defendant did not deny, in his declarations, that such a powder was found, but limited the quantity of it to one pound, while, upon search being made, two pounds were discovered. He declared that he was not aware of more; but the exciseman, whose knowledge was not so limited in matters of revenue as this gentleman's was professed to be in regard to brewing, and who, it appeared, had the advantage of a better education in the line of his business, was not satisfied with this account; and, making a more strict search, brought to light two pounds of this cow-powder. Being equally inquisitive with regard to the quantity of vitriol, the exciseman discovered not only three pounds, which was said by Mr. Abbott to be the amount of all that was about his premises, but fourteen pounds, togther with two boxes capable of containing fifty-six pounds, or half a hundred weight. Any jury in England, before whom such facts were laid, as that 14lbs of a substance were discovered along with two boxes, from which it was evidently taken, capable of containing 56lb., would have inferred, without hesitation, that these boxes had been formerly filled—that they had been purchased for the use of the brewery in which they were found—and that to that use a part of the substance that had disappeared had been applied. Nobody would buy boxes capable of containing 56lb. for the purpose of holding 14lb. except it were rendered probable that, having a small quantity of any substance, they were desirous of using a larger vessel. These were the rules upon which a jury would proceed; and they would not fail, from considering the attempted concealment, the probability that the concealment arose from the consciousness of bad intention, and all the other circumstantial evidences of the case, to bring in a verdict of guilty. This was not all: the vitriol was found scattered about, and the servants endeavoured to secret the boxes that contained it. He would leave it to the House to judge, if there was not here sufficient evidence to warrant the conclusion, that there was an intention, not only of practising a fraud upon the revenue, but of identifying that fraud with the mixture of rank poison in the beverage sold to the people as wholesome liquor.

Then came the testimonials in favour of Mr. Abbott. There were letters in his favour from Mr. Marryatt, from one of the members for the county, from an hon. baronet opposite (sir William Curtis), and from the member for the city of Canterbury (Mr. Baker), addressed to the treasury. They all spoke highly of his conduct prior to the transaction in question. The hon. baronet might speak with the utmost sincerity and from the warmest friendship, and in whatever he said there might be no reason for suspicion of political influence. The recommendation that came from one of the members representing the city where the defendant resided, and where his influence at an election might be exerted, appeared under different circumstances, and was liable to some suspicion. Although the testimony he offered might be prompted by the sentiments of regard that it appeared to express when the hon. member called Mr. Abbott his "much esteemed and valued friend," yet the House could not but view with some jealousy the interference of one member of parliament exerting his influence with the lords of the treasury, to screen from the consequences of a breach of law a person who might promote or oppose his election, and conveying that influence through the medium of another hon. member of the House (Mr. Lushington) who, besides being his colleague in representing the same city, was likewise one of the secretaries of the board to which the application was made [Hear, hear!]. There was another testimonial in Mr. Abbott's favour, which, though of no great importance in itself, was worthy the attention of the House, as being one of the many on which the lords of the treasury had founded their ultimate decision. It was a letter from the very reverend the dean of Canterbury, Dr. Gerrard Andrewes. The very reverend dean says in his letter,—

"I have just heard that my good neighbour, Mr. Abbott of Canterbury, is likely to get into some trouble respecting an information laid against him about his brewery, the nature of which, however, I do not understand. Ever since I have known him, he has appeared to me so good a man, and so useful a magistrate, that I should be very sorry to have that usefulness diminished, by his being brought forward to the public in a matter which only concerns ale drinkers"—[a laugh], "and I fear has its source in malice; for I will venture to say, that Mr. Abbott has not in reality been to blame. I have taken the liberty of mentioning this to you, because I think it my duty to prevent evil; and to lessen the influence of a useful man unnecessarily is a great evil; and if by producing this letter to those whom it may concern, you can serve him and the public, I shall be much gratified, &c."

This, indeed, was a most extraordinary testimonial which the worthy dean put forward in defence of his friend. Because, forsooth, the matter could only affect the lives or the health of "ale-drinkers," it was a matter of minor consideration, and not worth having his good neighbour Mr. Abbott, brought into trouble about [Hear, hear! and a laugh]. The good dean in the simplicity of his heart considered ale-drinkers merely as so many *feræ naturæ*, whom it would be of very little consequence to get rid of in any manner, whom every one was at liberty to destroy, and whose existence was in no manner to balance against the influence of Mr. Abbott [Hear, hear!]. But the House and the country would differ from the opinion of the worthy dean, and would think that ale-drinkers were too valuable a portion of society to be exposed to destruction by the fraud or ignorance of Mr. Abbott's servants.

The hon. and learned member then called the attention of the House to the decision of the board of excise, and observed, that in their report on this case to the lords of the treasury, they disproved many of the statements made by Mr. Abbott in his memorials. They stated that the charge made against Mr. Abbott was for one of the "grossest and least pardonable offences," which could be committed —namely, the using "adulterating ingredients in his beer, whereby not merely the revenue was defrauded, but the health of his majesty's subjects was highly endangered." They also stated that there had been 14lb. of vitrol (not 3lb. as stated by

Mr. Abbott in his memorial) in his concerns; that the servants could not have used such an ingredient without Mr. Abbott's knowledge, as he must have discovered it by the payments made for the large quantities procured; and they concluded their report with these words:—"Under circumstances of so flagrant a nature, we cannot think the memorialist entitled to the least favourable regard; but we shall consider it our indispensable duty to renew the proceedings against him, and bring the same to issue with all possible dispatch, unless we should have your lordships' positive orders to the contrary; so perfectly satisfied are we of the validity of the evidence now in our hands for convicting the offender; and we regret that the cause has been so far delayed from an *ex parte* representation totally false and groundless." This was the unbiassed opinion of the six commissioners, whose names were signed to their report. These were, M. Wish, lord G. Seymour, G. Watson, A. Phipps, B. Sydenham, and Mr. Serjeant Manley. They were all men of the highest character for honour, and could have no one motive for doing any thing partially against Mr. Abbott; on the contrary, they were from their connexions likely to be influenced more by the views of the treasury than against them. Every motive of interest and connexion, if any such could be supposed to have influence with these commissioners, was rather in favour of Mr. Abbott. Yet with all this, these upright men in the consciencious discharge of their public duty, gave the report to which he had just alluded.

And what did the lords of the treasury after this report, and with all these facts staring them in the face? They make an order for remitting the whole of the fine [Hear, hear, from the treasury benches]. Mr. Brougham begged pardon, he found he had been mistaken, but there were so many cases of this nature, that the mistake he had fallen into was very natural. The lords of the treasury did not order the remission of the whole fine, which would, if the proceedings were carried into effect, amount to several thousand pounds, but they ordered the board of excise to stay all further proceedings against Mr. Abbott, on his paying a fine of 500*l*. and the costs of the Crown. He should then ask what were the grounds on which the treasury came to that decision? They were simply that Mr. Abbott did not know of these deleterious ingredients having been used, and that he should not suffer for the crime of others—[Hear, hear! from the treasury benches]. He was glad to find by the cheers of the gentlemen opposite that this was agreed to. He was glad that they admitted a distinction between guilt in point of law and in point of fact, and he would be glad to see that this principle was carried further in other matters. He would wish to see that this distinction was adopted in those cases where the law of libel was concerned. On a former occasion he had adverted, though unsuccessfully, to the question of petitioning to the Crown for mercy in cases where no crime in point of fact had been committed by individuals, who were, nevertheless, severely punished. There were several cases of punishment for libel where the parties punished had been entirely innocent in point of fact, though not guiltless in point of law. He instanced the case of Wakefield and Cuthell, where the latter, who had never written the libel, and who, in publishing it, thought he had been publishing a dissertation on a Greek verb, yet still he had been convicted and severely punished. It was even proved by affidavit that Cuthell was out of town when the work was printed by his men; yet this distinction between guilt in law and in fact was not then made. The hon. and learned solicitor-general could inform the House that the usual mode adopted in those cases was, to make affidavit that the accused person was not guilty; but still he could also inform them that in no case of libel was this attended with any good effect to the prisoner. There was another case where a man was punished for a libel, which was published by his foreman, while he himself was in France. It was said on those occasions to the accused, "you are responsible for the actions of your servants, and if you suffer them to distribute poison throughout the country (for a libel might be considered as such) you must take the consequences." This was an extension of the law, which, if denied in one instance could not be fairly exercised in another. The next case was that of Wolf Benjamin, soapmaker, of Leigh, in Essex. Among the testimonies in his favour, there was one from Mr. Houblon, and two from two other members of the House. They bore testimony to his character in general, but particularly insisted upon his loyalty, as if loyalty were at all concerned in making a lees of alkali and tallow, and converting it into soap [A laugh]. How happened it that those three honourable members, whom he generally observed in their places opposite could think they had gained a point in obtaining a favourable consideration of their friend's case by attesting that he was not only honest but loyal? Could his loyalty be a higher praise than his honesty, or could it add to the merits of his character, if adorned by the latter attribute? Loyal in the sense of the treasury, might be something different from moral qualities; it might not mean to be free from any imputation of treason, and to be sincerely disposed to love the constitution; but to have a decided bias or ostensible leaning to a set of men, and kind of party principles [Hear]. There was a letter from an hon. friend of his (Mr. Western) in addition to those he had alluded to, and of a different character. It spoke nothing about loyalty, but merely bore testimony to the respectability of the individuals who agreed to make a representation in favour of the defendant. The last case he would mention was one more decidedly political than any of the former. The case of John Gibbs, of Emsworth, in Hampshire, was mitigated purely from political considerations. He was accused of having contravened the salt laws; and, after due inquiry and trial, judgment was given against him, fining him in a penalty of 600*l*. This case occurred, as he was willing to allow, six months before the present law increasing the powers of the treasury board passed. An application was made by Mr. Gibbs to the board of excise, stating a number of circumstances in favour of a remission of penalty. These circumstances were found by the board to be unfounded, and the application was of course resisted. He then gave in a testimonial in his favour, signed by a great number of persons, stating, that "John Gibbs, of Emsworth, had been uniformly distinguished for the loyalty of his principles." It would appear, however, that his loyalty did not lead him to respect the revenue laws, or to be a loyal subject in the matter of salt. The memorial then went on to state, that he not only was distinguished by his real support of his majesty's government, but that, "upon every public occasion, without any regard to personal expense or toil, he had been among the most active in his exertions in favour of the friends and measures of government." This might be said to mean nothing more than that Mr. Gibbs was favourable to the monarchical government as by law established, and a friend to the family, who occupied the throne of these realms. Those who knew any thing of the common acceptation of words would not rest in this meaning. He took every public occasion of testifying his principles. What did this signify, but that he raised his loyal voice in every public meeting to which he had access, to support the friends of ministry, or to clamour down their opponents—that he gave his loyal vote, and wrote his loyal signature? What did it mean, but that if there was a petition proposed against the measures of administration, he would exert himself against its passing—would endeavour to have it privately withdrawn, and set up a counter one of his own [Hear, hear!]. This was the character of a friend of his majesty's government in the treasury sense; and he would call upon the hon. gentleman opposite to say if the language employed in favour of the said Mr. Gibbs could mean any thing more or less? Such phrases were understood, and properly appreciated, both within and without the House. This testimonial was taken into consideration by the lords of the treasury, and so worded and backed, could not fail of success. The board of excise had made a report against him: another was made by the solicitor of the excise and a surveyor. It was stated that he even attempted to bribe the officer who made the seizure. Notwithstanding his loyalty, therefore, the commissioners of the excise were obliged by their sense of duty, to oppose his claim of remission of penalty, and to reject the testimonial that he had procured. He had already paid 200*l*. of his penalty, and they recommended the unmitigated exaction of the 400*l*. that remained. The treasury were disposed to pay more attention to a character distinguished for such loyalty; and, in terms rather insulting to the board of excise, they answered, that having taken into consideration its report, they were pleased to remit the remainder of the penalty.

He would now ask any one who had listened to the account of these facts, was a power that had been so abused, and that was so liable to abuse, to be intrusted any longer to the hands of the treasury board? What was the remedy (if it should be thought that a discretionary power of such magnitude should be lodged any where) for abuses like the present, he would not pretend to say. In what hands it would be less exposed to undue influence, it was not difficult to conjecture. He was of opinion, that the previous habits of the commissioners of excise, and the great quantity of regular business that passed through their office, together with the manner of considering every part of official duty as part of a system on which they were bound to act, without any discrimination of the circumstances of particular cases, might unfit them for exercising a judicious discretionary power. They might enforce penalties with too much rigour, or with too little regard to the characteristics of individual instances. This might show the necessity of establishing a right of appeal to some other tribunal on some occasions; but he was sure that the treasury board was the very worst place to which it could be referred. The treasury was exposed to all the fluctuations that could render its judgment suspected; it was exposed to every wind that blew from the court or the country; it was subject to the influence of every powerful elector or borough-monger; it was affected by the votes of this house; it was at the mercy of every great political event; it was liable to be turned by the gusts that blew from every part of the compass; and was certainly, therefore, not the place where impartial judgment could be expected. He hoped the House would concur in the motion with which he would conclude, though he thought a select committee should be appointed to consider fully the subject. The hon. and learned member then moved,

"That it appears to this House, that an information having been filed against John Gibbs of Emsworth, in the county of Southampton, for an offence against the act 38th Geo. 3, c. 89, touching the salt duties, judgment was entered up against him for the sum of 600*l*., of which 200*l*. were paid by him."—If this resolution was agreed to, he should move the following resolutions:

2. "That the said John Gibbs presented two memorials to the lords commissioners of his majesty's treasury, praying for a remission of the remaining part of the sum due, and that in support of this application he produced a certificate signed by many individuals in his neighbourhood, stating that he had always been distinguished for the loyalty of his principles and for his zeal in support of his majesty's government, and that he had upon every public occasion, without regard to personal expense or toil, been amongst the most active in his exertions in favour of the friends and the measures of government, and further stating that he had always borne the character of an honest and upright man."

3. "That the lords of the treasury referred the memorial and certificate to the board of excise for their consideration; and that the board reported their decided opinion, upon a full inquiry into the merits of the case, against any further mitigation of the penalties."

4. "That the lords of the treasury, on the 12th August 1814, issued their order to the board of excise to remit all that part of the penalty which remained unpaid, amounting to 400*l*., in consideration of the sum already paid, and of the aforesaid testimonials in his favour."

5. "That this conduct of the lords commissioners of his majesty's treasury was an unjustifiable exercise of the powers vested in them by law."

On the first resolution being put,

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, if the conduct of the lords of the treasury had been such as the hon. and learned gentleman had represented—if, forgetful of their duty, they had used the act to which the attention of the House had been called, not in conformity with their views of justice, but according to the influence it would give them, in that case he would admit that the strictures of the hon. and learned member would have been merited, and he ought to have moved, not merely a vote of censure, but an impeachment. The arguments of the hon. and learned gentleman had, however, proceeded on a complete mistatement both of the law in question, and of the practice of the treasury. The power of remitting penalties, he maintained, was properly vested in the lords of the treasury. They had the power of doing this before judgment was passed, previously to the passing of that act which the hon. and learned gentleman mentioned as having been abused. By that act they gained the power of remitting them after judgment, and also that of remitting the remuneration claimed by the officer or informer. The hon. and learned gentleman had selected, out of 29 cases which had been laid before the House, those which he had commented on in his speech that night. He had taken those where testimonies of character had been given by persons of distinction and and peers of the realm. A very different view would have been taken of this subject, had he brought under the consideration of the House those which were signed by persons of no political importance, as it would, had that attention been directed to those appeals to the treasury which had been rejected, instead of being confined to those in which the penalties had been remitted.—Had those to which he last referred been produced, they would have completely covered, not merely the table, but the whole area of the House. When the case of Gibbs was decided, it was proper to state that the reports of the solicitor and supervisor of the excise were not before the lords of the treasury. What difference these might have made he could not pretend to say. As the case came before the treasury, it appeared that a small vessel had been charged with a cargo of salt from the salt works in the Isle of Wight. On reweighing, it was found that 315 bushels had been shipped, instead of 300. This, however, it was proved, might have occurred through a variety of accidents. An officer had made affidavit that he (having received no bribe) believed that there had been no fraud intended, but that the 15 bushels had been added to the 300 in the hurry of loading. This considered, with the testimonials which had been given of his good character, would, he thought, justify the conduct of the treasury in being content that he should escape with having paid 200*l.* of the penalty, and being charged with costs to the amount of 200*l.* more. The letter written by lord Westmoreland respecting the case of Mr. Davie, as it contained only a recommendation that the case should be fully and fairly gone into before the lords of the treasury, was such as any person might with propriety have written. It was proved that the pipe which had been said to be concealed on Mr. Davie's premises was not a new one. It had been there in his father's time, and had been known to the officers of the revenue for the last forty years. All the favour that had been shown to him was this: he had been allowed (after being kept long in suspense) two months to pay the penalty in, on giving security for the money, and when he solicited longer time he had met with a positive refusal. With respect to the case of Mr. Abbott it was unfavourable to that person that the whole of the papers connected with it, had not been stated to the House. The correspondence between the informers and Mr. Abbott, disclosed circumstances most material in forming a full and correct view of the merits of the case. It appeared that attempts were made to extort money from Mr. Abbott, and that the person who informed was actuated by malice and ill-will towards him. The surveyor of excise, in the first instance, reported in favour of a mitigation of penalty. He doubted whether any jury would, on consideration of the contradictory and insane evidence brought forward against Mr. Abbott, have given a verdict against him; and when the treasury at last made him pay 500*l.* with all costs, he would ask the House if they did not think he had been visited with a punishment of sufficient severity? The case of Mr. Benjamin had been very slightly touched on; and, indeed, there were no grounds in that case to support the hon. and learned gentleman in his assumption. On the whole, he submitted that there was no foundation for charging the treasury with an act, which he was ready to admit was of a most scandalous nature, and highly deserving of grave punishment; and he should therefore move the previous question.

Mr. *Ponsonby* said, whatever might have been the state of the law before the passing of the act, this formed no defence for the right hon. gentleman against the present resolution. The whole of that defence rested on the ground, that, among the papers in the case of Gibbs, there were but two, the report of the supervisor to the board of excise, and the report of the solicitor, which were not before them when the treasury took their determination to remit the penalty, and that the only papers on which they proceeded were the report of the board of excise, and the testimonials and affidavit of Hatherly. Now what did the report of the board of excise state? It stated that the defendant agreed, after a full examination of evidence, to let a verdict be given against him for 500*l.* and costs; that he was present at reweighing the salt; that he anticipated the result; that it was clearly evident from all the circumstances it was an intentional fraud; that there was reason to believe the same offence had often been committed before; and that many of the facts stated in the memorial were not true. Was not this matter sufficient to induce the treasury to make further inquiry into the business? He would ask the House if they could suppose, had the character given of Gibbs been, that he was a troublesome, noisy man, remarkable for his opposition to the friends and measures of government, that the lords of the treasury would have decided in his favour? [Hear, hear!] No gentleman in the House could think they would have done so. It was this character of loyalty and constant support of government which induced the treasury to decide in favour of the memorialist. The decision so given was an abuse of the powers vested in the treasury by the act. He would not stop to inquire whether the treasury was, or was not the fit tribunal in whose hands this power should be lodged: his opinion was, that it was not a fit tribunal; but having the power, they had abused it. If the House should approve of the conduct of the treasury, he should say this confidently, that not one man out of the House would agree in opinion with them.

The *Solicitor General* agreed, that if the commissioners of excise had any other information on this transaction except what they derived from their own interested inferior officers, their representation ought beyond all measure, to outweigh the statements of the memorial. He had himself known many instances of subordinate officers laying informations which were not at all bottomed in positive or personal knowledge. A case had occurred recently of a prosecution for penalties under the acts which render the exportation of gunpowder, when forbidden by proclamation an offence punishable not only by penalties, but by forfeiture of the vessel. The ship had cleared out for Berbice, and on her return the seizure was made. The owners applied for a remission on the ground of their entire ignorance of the offence having been committed. In answer to this it was alleged, that the vessel had gone to the United States, and had there delivered her cargo of gunpowder. An inquiry into the truth of this allegation followed, when it was established by the clearest evidence, that the vessel had pursued her voyage directly to Berbice, and from Berbice home, and to no other place. All the explanation given by the officer who commenced the prosecution was, that those from whom he derived his information had gone abroad. It was upon the evidence of persons who had a deep interest in the prosecution that the board of excise necessarily formed their judgment. It was absolutely requisite for the safety of the subject that there should be a power of review and control; and this power, if it did exist at all, could no where be so properly lodged as in the board of treasury, who were the commissioners for executing the office of lord high treasurer, to whom, by the common law, the supreme administration of the revenue laws was confided. In the case of Gibbs the memorialists had stated, that he had already sustained an entire loss of 920*l.* from the consequences of this prosecution. With regard to the testimonials in his favour, there was no doubt some trash about the loyalty of the man's principles; but it was to impute an extraordinary degree of corruption to the treasury to suppose that this had any influence whatever upon their decision. Nothing was more common than to remit a portion of the penalties, in order to recover something: and in many cases the recovery of the whole must consign the offender to gaol, and his family to destruction. The board of excise was bound by its constitution, and the warrants under which its members acted, to conform to the directions of the treasury, except when they were sitting in a judicial character, and receiving informations. It was equally certain, that by the common law the Crown had a power of remitting all fines and penalties, as far as they were due to the Crown itself. By several statutes the power of filing informations under the revenue laws was limited to the king's attorney-general, and to officers employed in the service of the revenue. The purpose of this regulation was to give the law officers of the Crown a jurisdiction over the progress of the suit, and a power of staying proceedings. A similar authority had in some cases been committed to the commisioners of the customs. The treasury was only so far limited as to act in concurrence with the attorney general. When he read the letter of Rogers, the excise officer who laid the information against Gibbs, it was impossible for him to doubt that he was influenced either by interest or by malice. The documents produced that night for the first time ought in fairness not to have been kept back, but to have been transmitted to their superior officers by the persons from whom they proceeded. It was under these views that he considered the interposition in favour of this person to have been strictly justifiable. With regard to the other cases, and particularly to that of Mr. Abbott, he saw still less reason for calling in question the exercise of the powers vested in the treasury. The principal witness appeared to be either malicious or insane, and the penalties as the record was framed, could not have amounted to less than 4 or 5,000*l.* The offence was, however, but one act, namely, the having deleterious materials in his possession; and the utmost that any jury could have done, would be, to find for two penalties of 200*l.* each. The proceedings were, nevertheless, not staid till Mr. Abbott had paid 500*l.* besides costs. He sincerely believed that Mr. Abbott's character was as fair as any man's could be; and with regard to the name of Gerrard Andrewes, on which his hon. and learned friend had thought proper to make some remarks, he should only observe, that it was a name that stood too high to be affected by any expressions uttered by way of joke.

Sir *Samuel Romilly* was desirous of stating shortly the grounds on which he should give his vote in support of the present motion. He was as little disposed as any man to look with jealousy at the exercise of the prerogative of mercy; yet he looked in vain for any reason in the case then under discussion for dispensing with the penalties incurred by Gibbs, except that he was a friend to the measures of government, or, in plainer words, of the then existing ministry. That the power of remitting penalties of this description did reside with his majesty's treasury was beyond dispute; but it was a most serious consideration whether a trust so sacred had or had not been perverted to private ends, and to objects of party advantage. What would have been the result of this application, had the offender been as distinguished for his political zeal in the behalf of the opposite interest, was a point on which no man could entertain a doubt. The treasury had referred the case to the board of excise, who reported on it after a conviction in a court of justice—who reported not only upon the results of their own inquiry, but on the minutes of evidence taken upon the trial; and it bore, therefore, no resemblance to the case mentioned by his hon. and learned friend, in which the commissioners were so liable to be deceived by the information of their own officers. The commissioners, after reviewing the whole proceedings, concluded by expressing their conviction, that this was an instance of gross fraud. What, then, was the conduct of the treasury, who had before thought proper to refer the memorial to the board of excise? Having received their report, and not being satisfied with it, they proceeded to lay out of their consideration all the merits of the case; and, regarding only the testimonials in the man's favour, the penalties already paid, and his former character, they comply with the prayer of his memorial. But the House ought to look then to the nature of these testimonials, and first to the petition of the man himelf. In his opinion, this petition was an insult on his majesty's treasury. It presumed to allude to his former services and to his uniform and zealous exertions in support of government, as a ground upon which he was entitled to require the benefit of that solemn trust of dispensing with the penalties of the law, which had been committed to the board of treasury. His hon. and learned friend might affect to call this trash, the mere effusions of a vulgar and illiterate mind, that could not possibly have any influence upon the conduct of his right hon. friends; but the same titles to consideration were enforced in the testimonials which came from magistrates, deputy lieutenants, beneficed clergymen, and solicitors, who must be supposed to know what topics to select in their applications to the treasury. Upon the subject of Gibbs's loyalty and attachment to the government, all these gentlemen were distinct and positive; but with respect to his honesty and fair dealing, all they say was, that they understood he had always borne a good one. Had he been recommended for honesty merely, the success of the application would probably have been less. It was to be recollected also, that the whole of these cases had occurred in the short period of one month.

Mr. *Lushington* said, the hon. and learned gentleman had entirely omitted to notice the certificate of the excise officer which stated his conviction that the overweight of salt was owing to some mistake. As to the general question, it was certainly one of the most important that could be agitated. From the time he had held the office in which he now was, he had thought the revisal of the reports of the revenue boards was absolutely necessary, as they invariably concluded by stating, that the case was one in which mercy could not be exercised. He scorned the imputation of the hon. and learned gentleman, as to being influenced by party motives in the transaction in question; he threw back this imputation to the hon. and learned gentleman with the utmost contempt. He could show letters which he had received from the other side of the House, expressive of perfect approbation of the proceedings adopted by the treasury on various occasions. With respect to the act itself, it was absolutely necessary for the protection of the liberty of the subject. He then entered into an explanation of the grounds on which the act had been passed. As to the particular cases, he believed that Mr. Abbott was a most excellent man, and in forming this opinion, he was so far from being actuated by party feeling, that all he knew of the political principles of Mr. Abbott was, that they were exactly in opposition to his own. He again disclaimed the imputation of his condct being in any degree influenced by political motives.

Mr. *Tierney* thought the question lay in a very small compass. He maintained that in the case alluded to by the resolution, there had been an unjustifiable exercise of their powers on the part of the lords of the treasury. In support of the remission of the penalty there was nothing but the word of the man himself, and the certificate of one officer. As to the testimonials of other persons, whose respectability he admitted, he rejected them from their nature and substance. One hon. and learned gentleman had said, that the evidence of Rogers would have been quite sufficient to show that the prosecution was grounded on malice; but if this was the case, why did not the lords of the treasury send back the matter for further inquiry? The fact was, that this would not have suited their purpose, as their own anxiety was, to remit the penalties to this friend of government. It must be evident that this was a case in which the powers had been unjustifiably exercised, unless it was proved that the treasury had taken every pains to inquire into the case. The firm conviction on his mind was, that the remission of penalties had been made because the individual was found to be a useful partizan of government. His only objection to the motion was that it was much too mild. If he did not know his hon. and learned friend so well as he did, he should almost have thought, from the language of the motion that he was tampering with the other side of the House [a laugh].

Lord *Castlereagh* said, he had never heard a proceeding so burlesque within the walls of the House, as the right hon. gentleman's affecting to say that the motion was not in a tone of sufficiently high censure against his majesty's government. It had been completely shown that the act rather increased than diminished the responsibility of the lords of the treasury. The hon. and learned gentleman thought the act was one which it was likely might have been used by government for party purposes, so he began by a fishing motion for the proceedings which had taken place upon it during a whole year. When he found that this could not be complied with, he fixed upon one month, taking it at random, in hopes of being able to make something of it. Out of the twenty-nine cases which thus got into his hands, the hon. and learned gentleman had only been able to pick out four, on which he could attempt to found an imputation against the lords of the treasury. In fact, the whole drift of the hon. and learned gentleman's proceeding was to endeavour by any means to excite odium against his majesty's government. But it was rather too much to go the length of charging them with corruption, and being actuated by despicable party motives. He had as much right to say that the eagerness manifested by the hon. members on the other side of the House against the person whose case was referred to in the motion, was from party motives, and because that individual was of opposite political principles to those which they professed. It was really curious to see the hon. members on the opposite side exerting themselves in favour of the most rigorous execution of the excise laws. In fact, these hon. gentlemen would do any thing for or against the liberties of the subject for the sake of throwing odium upon government [Hear, hear!]. This could be their only object in the present instance, where they called for the most severe infliction of the law against the subject. In the case to which the motion referred there had been a fraud against the revenue to the extent of fifteen bushels of salt. The case had come before the treasury, with the affidavit of the excise officer, stating his conviction, that the fraud had been committed unintentionally and by mistake, with other testimonials as to the character of the individual, which, however injudiciously worded, gave a most favourable account of his character. On these the lords of the treasury had exercised their discretion. But if there had been fraud in the case, there had also been punishment; and surely a penalty of more than 900*l.* was a sufficient expiation for such an offence. Such was the severity of the excise laws, that unless there was a mitigating power vested in some branch of the government, they could not be tolerated by the subject. It had been said that this power should be vested in the collecting board; but surely nothing more absurd could be proposed. It might as well be said, that the powers of exercising mercy in criminal cases should be in the hands of the judges instead of the Crown [Hear, hear!]. He lamented, that during the debate the treasury had been opposed to the board of excise, which was most meritoriously conducted.

Mr. *William Smith* agreed, that the discretion of the treasury was most imperiously called for to lighten the hardship and severity of the excise laws: and was persuaded that, unless such a power was exercised, the pressure could not be borne by the people. With respect to the case in point, he confessed that it did appear to him to be one in which party influence had been considered, and therefore he should vote in favour of the original question.

Mr. *Huskisson* said, he had signed the memorial, and put it into the hands of the proper officers, in order that the case might be inquired into. With regard to the case of Mr. Gibbs, he defied the hon. gentlemen on the opposite side to state one single instance where this gentleman had appeared as a party man, either at elections or at public meetings.

Mr. *Rose* referred to the acts previous to that of the 54th of the king on this subject; and instanced two cases, in order to show the urgent necessity for the additional power being vested in the treasury to mitigate the penalties under the excise laws.

Mr. *Hart Davis* explained, that in signing the memorial in favour of Mr. Gibbs, he was actuated by no party or political principles.

Mr. *Protheroe* considered the tendency of the present motion to be highly prejudicial to the interests and welfare of that people whose rights and liberties the hon. and learned gentleman had been always the first to protect, not only against the rigours of the excise laws, but against all other measures which tended to oppress and degrade the people of England. He confessed himself perfectly surprised at the course the hon. and learned gentleman had this night taken. The utmost rigours of the commissioners of the property tax were lenity itself to the oppressive severities of the commissioners of excise: and he could not consider that those commissioners were the proper judges of the portion of humanity which should be exercised.

Alderman *Atkins* said, he was decidedly against the motion.

Mr. Brougham shortly replied. After which the House divided:—

For the Resolution	48
For the previous question...., .	124
Majority	—76

The previous question was then put on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Resolutions and agreed to. The 5th Resolution was negatived.

List of the Minority.

Abercrombie, hon. J.
Althorp, viscount
Barham, James
Brougham, H.
Burrell, hon. P. D.
Byng, George
Calcraft, J.
Crevey, Thomas
Duncannon, visc.
Dundas, hon. L.
Fergusson, sir R. C.
Fitzroy, lord J.
Folkestone, visc.
Grant, John P.
Hamilton, sir H. D.
Heathcote, sir G.
Heron, sir R.
Hornby, E.
Hughes, W. L.
Lambton, John
Lemon, sir W.
Lloyd, J. M.
Mackintosh, sir J.
Madocks, W. A.
Markham, admiral
Monck, sir C.
Moore, P.
Morland, S. B.
Morpeth, visc.
Newport, sir J.
North, Dudley
Nugent, lord
Osborne, lord F.
Ossulston, lord
Ponsonby, rt. hon. G.
Prittie, hon. F. A.
Plunckett, rt. hn. W. C.
Pym, Francis
Romilly, sir S.
Russell, lord Wm.
Russell, lord G. W.
Sharp, R.
Smith, W.
Smyth, J. H.
Stanley, lord
Tavistock, marquis
Tierney, rt. hon. G.
Wynn, C. W.
Webster, sir G.

TELLERS.

Bennet, hon. H.
Ridley, sir M. W.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, April 3.

Petition for Retrenchment and Economy.] Earl *Gower* presented a petition from the freeholders of the county of Stafford, praying for the most rigorous economy and retrenchment. He said, he had been prevented from being present at the meeting, but he understood it was most numerously attended, and that the petition was most respectably signed. The persons who signed it were actuated by no party motives, but merely by that common feeling, which now animated the whole country, from one end to the other, and which so loudly called for retrenchment. He was anxious to add, that he perfectly concurred in the prayer of the petition, and he hoped his majesty's ministers would go on in the course they had so auspiciously begun, of enforcing the most rigid economy in every department of the public expenditure.

Mr. *E. Lyttleton* could not refrain from paying a tribute of approbation to the moderate language of the petition, which, however, was only such as might be expected from the highly respectable and perfectly independent characters who had signed it. He congratulated the House on the good effect which had resulted from such petitions; and he must do ministers the justice to say, that they had lately shown every disposition to comply with the wishes, and consult the interests of the country, by making a variety of proper retrenchments. He trusted they would proceed still further, which would entitle them to that confidence in peace which they had acquired by the conclusion of the war.

Mr. *Methuen* congratulated the House upon the accession of strength which the question of economy was daily obtaining. He hoped, that as they now had the benefit of the opinion of those honourable members, they would also have the benefit of their votes.

Mr. *Curwen* observed, that there never was a period in the history of this country when there was so unanimous a feeling throughout all classes of people, upon the absolute necessity of economy. He was convinced there was not a single independent man to be found, who did not desire retrenchment, and who did not believe, that the very safety of the country depended upon it. He was certainly gratified in observing, that ministers had begun to retrench, but they must go a great way further, before enough would be done to prevent the ruinous necessity of borrowing money in time of peace. It would never do to go on upon a system of borrowing eight millions in a year of peace. The complaints and prayers of the petitioners were not founded on any party spirit, but arose from the opinions of the country from one extremity to the other. The oldest member of parliament could not recollect a greater degree of public unanimity.

The petition was ordered to lie on the table.

STATE OF CHILDREN IN MANUFACTORIES.] Sir *Robert Peel* rose, in pursuance of a previous notice, to submit a motion to the House respecting the state of children employed in the cotton manufactories. The object of his motion was altogether national, as it affected the health and morals of the rising generation, and went to determine, whether the introduction of machinery into our manufactories was really a benefit. The principle business in our cotton manufactures was now performed by machinery, and, of course, interrupted the division of work suitable to the respective ages, which formerly was practised in private houses. The consequence was, that little children of very tender age were employed with grown persons at the machinery, and those poor little creatures, torn from their beds, were compelled to work, even at the age of six years, from early morn till late at night—a space of perhaps 15 or 16 hours! He allowed that many masters had humanely turned their attention to the regulation of this practice; but too frequently the love of gain predominated, inducing them to employ all their hands to the greatest possible advantage. Some time ago he had introduced a bill into the House, for regulating the work of apprentices, which was attended with the happiest results, and their time was limited; but children were still subjected to all the hardships to which carelessness or avidity might expose them. The House were well aware of the many evils that resulted from the want of education in the lowest classes. One object of his present bill was to enable manufacturing children to devote some of their time to the acquirement of a little useful simple knowledge, such as plain reading and writing. He hoped those poor children would experience the protection of the House, for if it were not extended to them, all our excellent machinery would be productive of injury. It might, perhaps, be said, that free labour should not be subjected to any control; but surely it could not be inconsistent with our constitution, to protect the interests of those helpless children. The hon. baronet concluded with moving, "That a committee be appointed to take into consideration the state of the children employed in the different manufactories of the united kingdom; and to report the same, together with their observations thereupon to the House."

Mr. *Finlay* said, he had no intention to oppose the motion of the hon. baronet, but he could not concur in the calumny which he had uttered against all the manufactories of the united kingdom [cries of No, no! from all parts of the House]; by stating, that children of a tender age were torn from their beds at an early hour, and compelled to work during a space of 15 or 16 years. To such a statement he must give a flat denial. No doubt there might be some manufactories where those practices were permitted, but he could state that in the manufactories of Scotland, and especially that part of Scotland with which he was connected they did not exist. In fact, it was a general rule in the cotton manufactories of that country, not to employ any children under ten years of age; and as to the general healthiness and convenience of those establishments, he would venture to affirm that the cotton mills of Glasgow were not only situated most advantageously for health, but were conducted upon the most liberal plan. With respect to the object of the hon. baronet's motion, he believed it to be a very laudable one, and likely to produce much good; but he could not help feeling some degree of surprise that the hon. baronet should have deferred such a measure till now, when he was about to quit the concern in which he had been so many years engaged. Those abuses, of which he now complained, must have existed for many years, and equally in his own establishments, as in others, yet he had never before thought it necessary to propose any measures of relief.

Sir *Robert Peel* hoped the House would permit him to say a few words in reply to what had fallen from the hon. member who spoke last. He had accused him of calumniating all the manufactories of the United Kingdom, but he trusted no one would suspect him of calumniating a body for which he felt so much respect. With regard to another imputation cast upon him by the hon. member, that he had not brought the present measure forward till he was about to quit the concern in which he was engaged, he would remind the hon. member that twelve years ago, when he was deeply interested in it, he brought in a bill for regulating the apprentices in the cotton trade.

Mr. *Lyttleton* said, he was persuaded that it would be found impossible, when the committee went into the business, to apply such a bill as was brought forward last session, to all the manufactories in the kingdom.

Mr. *Curwen* took that opportunity of protesting against the principle of legislating for the regulation of the authority of parents over their children, who must be best aware of the quantity of work those children were able to bear, and who must undoubtedly feel most for their distresses. Such a proceeding was a libel on the humanity of parents. He stated that in all the manufactories of which he knew any thing, regulations had been established, which considerably ameliorated the condition of the persons employed, and the air of all of them had been of late so much improved, that labour was not half so distressing as it had been previously. He however had no objection to a committee.

Mr. *Courtenay* was well convinced that the hon. baronet could be influenced by no other motive than that of humanity, but he thought that there appeared no reason for imputing a system of cruelty to the great body of the manufacturers of the kingdom. Regulations of the best description had been generally established by them, which would be sufficiently manifested to the committee, to which he had no objection.

Mr. *R. Gordon* expressed his gratitude to the hon. baronet, for having so zealously and uniformly exerted himself in support of the interests of humanity. Much good had been already accomplished, and much might be anticipated from the appointment of a committee. The House might remember a circumstance, which by a similar inquiry, had transpired during the last session. It had appeared, that overseers of parishes in London, were in the habit of contracting with the manufacturers in the north for the disposal of children; and those manufacturers agreed to take one ideot for every nineteen sane children. In this manner, waggon loads of those little creatures were sent down, to be at the perfect disposal of their new masters. The fact alone was sufficient to justify an inquiry.

Mr. *Wrottesley* also spoke in favour of a committee, conceiving that the establishment of good regulations in individual manufactories, was not sufficient cause to prevent parliament from compelling their more general adoption. If there were 99 manufactories well regulated, while the 100th was in a different state, that alone would authorize the exertion of parliament.

Mr. *Finlay* explained, and in the course of his observations to prove that the apprentices in Scotland were already well educated, related an anecdote of a boy sent from London, who returned when his time was out, so improved and accomplished, that his mother actually walked from London to Scotland to thank his masters for the benefit they had conferred on him.

The motion was then agreed to, and a committee appointed.

HELLESTON ELECTION BILL.] On the motion that the Bill to prevent corrupt and illegal practices, and secure the freedom and purity of election in the borough of Helleston, be read a second time,

Mr. *Swan* entered at some length into the history of this borough, which was once under the influence of a noble duke, and afterwards came into the hands of sir Christopher Hawkins, who lost it. Mistakes were sometimes made as to the nature of the proprietor and the patron of a borough. The proprietor influenced his tenant's votes. The patron might be quite unconnected as to property with the borough; but he did certain acts to secure the return of the members. When an hon. member opposite was turned out of Helleston, his successor paid 5,000*l.* besides other considerations.

Mr. *Davies Giddy* opposed the bill, contending that sufficiently strong grounds had not been laid for its adoption. He moved that the bill be read a second time that day six months. He admitted that the borough was for a long time under the influence of a noble family.

Mr. *Baring* said, that whatever might be thought of the influence of a noble family in a borough, or whatever notions might prevail in Cornwall or elsewhere as to the criminality of such influence or interference in returning members to parliament, he did not think it a matter to be spoken of lightly in that House.

General *Thornton* considered that much of the evil having been removed, the borough did not deserve to be treated with the severities which this bill would enact.

Sir *J. Newport* observed, that when a system of corruption was known to exist, the House were far from doing their duty if they did not with vigour apply some means for removing it. The case now before them was extremely similar to the Aylesbury case, and he had no doubt the House would show their determination to check it. The respectability of the House was forfeited, and its claims to the confidence of the public annihilated if it did not promptly express its strong disapprobation of the undue means so successfully used in this borough for the promotion of party views. On this principle he would give his vote for the original motion, and he had no doubt that the object of it would be sanctioned by the voice of the House.

Mr. *Wynn* was decidedly of the same opinion.

Mr. *Swan* observed, that if this measure were not properly followed up, he saw no reason why Helleston might not revert to the old practice. Three aldermen out of five had, in fact, elected 31 freemen, who being afterwards reduced to 14 or 15, formed the majority, and were related to, or under the control of, the families of the clergyman and an alderman, who managed the borough. He remembered an application made to him once by the duke of Portland, to know the value of the living of Helleston. At that time he supposed it worth about 500*l.* a year; but he had learned that it was worth double that sum. The living was given to the alderman's son, who only took 100*l.* a year out of it, and another living was soon applied for. The hon. member referred to Cricklade and Aylesbury, which had now become respectable boroughs, as instances of the propriety of the bill.

The bill was read a second time, and ordered to be committed on the 22nd instant.

POLICE OF THE METROPOLIS.] Mr. *Bennet* rose to move for a committee to inquire into the state of the Police of the Metropolis. The question, he said, had been often before considered—in 1772, in 1791, and again in 1812; in consequence of the atrocious acts (the murder of the Marrs and Williamsons) which had struck the metropolis with horror and alarm; but the labours of the last committee, as far as any beneficial result might have been looked for, amounted to nothing at all. Much curious matter might be found in the papers; such as, regulations in the time of Edward 1st, orders of lord Burleigh, and other matter of the same description; but no practical benefits ensued.* He should first state, that he considered the system of giving 40*l.* on convictions for offences of magnitude a very bad one: the money was technically called *blood money;* and the consequence was, that offenders were allowed to escape, till by the progress of crime; they increased in value. The giving of sums of money in the way of rewards had also been found very pernicious on the same principle. There were no less than 128 flash houses between Westminster-hall and Temple-bar. To these the profligate of all descriptions repaired as regularly as a merchant to his shop; and he felt a sort of repugnancy that the police officer should associate in all this low debauchery, and laugh at the same board with the offender, till his blood became worth the price fixed on it. He conceived the cause of all this great increase of crime to be, the uncertainty of our laws, and the chance that an offender always had of escape. If the punishments were less severe, but always certain, the number of offences would immediately diminish. At present there were 6,789 penal offences in the English law; and Blackstone himself admitted that this formidable list of punishments, so far from lessening, increased the frequency of crime. Whether from compassion in the prosecutor, unwillingness in the witness, or a leaning towards mercy in the jury and judges, because they thought the punishment disproportioned to the offence, the number that escaped greatly exceeded that of those who were executed; while hardened offenders, looking not to those who suffered, but to those who escaped, persevered the more in their iniquitous courses. Another objection to the present system was the great expense of prosecution. It had been said, that the English law was open to every one, and so was the London tavern. But it was the expense that hindered us from hunting down offenders, and chasing them from society as soon as they appeared. The expense of the different prosecutions last year amounted to 40,000*l.* or 50,000*l.* Besides this, there were many parts of England in which the gaols were no more than schools for vice and depravation. In Newgate, the Cold Bath Fields, Tothill Fields, and other prisons of this metropolis, there was no classification whatever of offences: the eye of the public was removed, and innocent and guilty, young and old, novices and hardened offenders, were all thrown together; so that when they were discharged or acquitted, they were turned out on society with lost character at least, if not with vicious acquirements. Within these few days he had himself visited Newgate, and never was there a scene so distressing. Boys of twelve and fifteen were found there, herding with the most hardened and abandoned characters. The hulks were, in the same manner, another great school of depravity, and a means of disseminating vice and misery. No less than 700 persons were discharged from them last year, and let loose on society, without employment and fraught with the instructions of crime. To these must be added the convicts returned from Botany Bay. Mr. Colquhoun stated, that he never knew an instance in which a person returned from Botany Bay did not pursue the same course as before his transportation. He (Mr. Bennet) was not surprised at all this, when he considered the regulations of our police, the severity and consequent uncertainty of our law, the expense of prosecution, and the state of our gaols, in which the new comer could only spend his hours in listening to and hearing applauded the anecdotes of successful crime. With this machinery, and with the addition of the hulks and Botany Bay, all in active employ for the creation of vice, no other result could be expected than that which we found so distressing. In looking at the papers before the House, he saw that there were convicted (if we heard rightly) in 1807, 1070 individuals; in 1808, 1810; in 1809, 1243; in 1811, 1207; in 1812, 1216; in 1813, 1475; in 1814, 1420. During the last year were committed to Cold Bath Fields 1800; to Tothill Fields 600; to Newgate 380; and of those, eighty were only from eight to fifteen years of age. There were in Newgate last Saturday thirty-five under sentence of transportation, and twelve under sentence of death; one boy there, of twelve years old, stated that he had been deserted by his family at six years old, and that since that time he had been frequently in custody; that he went down, with thirteen others, to Portsdown fair, for the purposes of depredation—a distance of seventy miles! This child was now under sentence of death; but he (Mr. Bennet) trusted that some means might be found of restoring him to society, if it were possible to effect his reform. He was aware that it would not be possible for that House all at once to find a remedy for these enormous evils; but he was sure that much might be done by following up the measures recommended by a former committee; by examining whether the police were well administered or no; by ascertaining whether a general board might not be established, and communications kept up with the local police, so that some check might be given to this system of juvenile depravity. At present there were no less than 9,000 children upon the town, living by depredation or mendicity. He should, therefore, move, "That a committee be appointed to inquire into the state of the Police of the Metropolis, and to report the same, with their observations thereupon, to the House."

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* For a copy of this Report see Vol. XXII. Appendix, p. lxv.

Mr. *Hammersley* said, the parochial police was absolutely null, if not productive of evil. His attention had been drawn to the subject by the disgraceful riots that occurred two years ago: he mentioned the thing at that time to an hon. gentleman opposite (Mr. H. Addington), but his statements had met with no attention. In the parish of St. James were fourteen constables; but as these acted without pay, the vestry, at the time of the disturbances, assembled to appoint an effective police; at the end of four days six persons came forward, and an investigation then took place, whether the parish officers were authorized to pay constables or no; but it was found their pay depended only on the voluntary contributions of the inhabitants. He thought, therefore, a bill should be brought in, and means adopted to swear in and pay a certain number of constables out of that rank which was respectable enough to act with spirit, but could not afford to bestow its time on this service for nothing. He never wished to see a soldier employed in the assistance of the police, and he was certain by these means that the civil power itself would be found quite sufficient.

Mr. *Addington* would only say one word as to a sort of imputation that he thought had been cast on him. He could assure the hon. gentleman that he never intended to slight any application that had been made. The hon. gentleman's statement had been shown to his noble relative, the secretary of state for the home department; but the suggestions were thought a little impracticable, and there was at the time a great pressure of business. As to the motion that had just been made, till he heard the hon. mover's speech, he was quite at a loss to conceive on what ground the motion would be made. From the situation which he unworthily held, he had opportunities of knowing that the metropolis was never more tranquil than at present: but, having listened to the hon. mover's speech, he heard several points which were altogether new to him. The House would concur with him that a select committee ought not to be granted on slight occasions. Yesterday he had an opportunity of seeing what was the state of the metropolis. It had been the practice of the secretary of state for the home department to have a detailed report from the magistrates of the district once a month; and on their meeting last Saturday, they all declared, with the greatest satisfaction, that they had never known the metropolis more tranquil than at present. It was to them rather a matter of surprise, to find it in so undisturbed a state, considering a peace had been recently concluded, which necessarily threw a great number of persons loose upon the town, who might be expected to be betrayed into the commission of crime. This was felt so strongly by his noble relation, that in November last, he had given the magistrates most especial instructions to redouble their vigilance. The increase of juvenile depravity he could not deny. The chief magistrate of the city had told him that every night those boys were taken up, who were found in the streets as vagrants, and endeavours were made, and in many instances with success, to restore them to habits of industry. Besides this, the penitentiary now erecting, and which would be opened in two or three months, would afford the opportunity of placing these juvenile depredators in a situation in which they would not be liable to the evils described by the hon. gentleman, as resulting from an association with the more hardened criminals confined in the ordinary prisons. On the whole, if it was the wish of the House that such a committee should be appointed, he would by no means object to it; but he hoped that their objects would be so narrowed as to afford the best chance for their making an early report on the subject.

The motion was agreed to, and a committee appointed.

MOTION RESPECTING THE OFFICES OF THE SECRETARIES OF STATE.] Mr. *Tierney* rose to call the attention of the House to a subject of the highest importance under the present circumstances of the country: he should confine his proposition to a short compass, because he was afraid, at that late hour, of wearying the House. His proposition, then, was simply this—"That an humble Address be presented to his royal highness the Prince Regent, to represent to his royal highness, that his faithful Commons, relying upon the gracious disposition of his royal highness, to concur in all such measures of economy as may be consistent with the security of the country; humbly pray, that his royal highness would be graciously pleased to give directions, that the division of the state officers made in 1794 (by which, in addition to the Secretaries of State for the home and foreign departments, a secretary of state was constituted for the war department), be revised, and that the departments of the secretaries of state be, now that peace is happily restored, again placed, with all convenient dispatch, upon the footing on which they stood in 1793." His object in making this motion was to save to the public the expense of a third secretary of state; and the proposition he had to make out was, that this might be done consistently with the public service and the good of the country. Unless he made this proposition clear beyond dispute, he could have no claim to the attention of the House. On former occasions, many debates had arisen in that House as to the office in question. In 1794, Mr. Dundas was appointed to the office then created, under the name of the Board Department; and the question then was, whether Mr. Dundas was capable of retaining his seat in that House while holding such an appointment. The question now had nothing to do with that discussion, but merely related to the expediency of the office. He must go a little into the history of the appointment, in order that gentlemen might have some general notion as to the manner in which it arose. Up to the year 1768, there were only two secretaries of state; but, in consequence of the critical situation of the country during the war with America, a third was afterwards added. In this state things continued up to the year 1782, when, by a bill of Mr. Burke's, the office of the third secretary was abolished. From the year 1782, up to 1794, the business was conducted by two secretaries of state, under the name of secretaries of state for the foreign and home department; they dividing the business between them, by an arrangement that was most convenient to themselves. In the year 1794, the war going on with France, Mr. Dundas, the secretary of state for the home department, also carried on the business of what was then for the first time called the war department. The business, however, occasioned by the war accumulated to such a degree, that it was thought necessary to separate the two departments; and on that occasion it was, that the office of secretary of state for the war department was created. Thus it appeared that his office grew out of the war alone; it was on the exclusive ground of the great business which the war occasioned that it had been created, and not at all on any consideration connected with the colonial business. The only object of the creation of this office was, to ease the office of the secretary of state for the home department, of the business of the war. He believed (although of this he was not certain) that until 1801—that was for seven years—all business connected with the colonies was transacted by the secretary of state for the home department. It was not necessary on the present occasion to inquire why, in 1801, the colonial business had been transferred from the office of the secretary of state for the home department to the office of the secretary of state for war. It was desirable, however, to know what was the precise nature of the home office. By one of the papers on the table it appeared that Mr. King, one of the secretaries of that office, had on examination stated the business of it to be the receiving of intelligence and the carrying on of all correspondence relative to every part of the British empire, with the single exception of the East Indies, as also every thing respecting grants, pardons, and regulations in all civil matters, preferments in the church, matters of police, the regular army, militia, and volunteers, dispensations, licenses to trade, alien regulations, in short every domestic matter, with the exception of the business of the revenue and those affairs which were under the management of the lord chancellor. It thus appearing that the third secretaryship was created in 1794 solely to transact the business of the war, his conclusion was, that as the war was at an end, that secretaryship ought to be abolished. He called on the right hon. gentlemen opposite to state what had occurred since 1793 to render it inexpedient to recur to the establishment of the state office at that period. He pressed this the more strongly, because no one step had yet been taken by the House on the recommendation of economy contained in the speech made on the opening of the session; and because that speech distinctly stated his royal highness the Prince Regent's readiness to concur in any measures of economy which parliament might think proper to suggest. He declared, upon his word, that he was actuated by no invidious, or personal, or party feeling on this occasion. Were his own political friends in power, he would make the same proposition, and he had no doubt that in that event they would have acceded to it. In the present situation of the country, it became necessary to save every hundred pound that could be saved. He begged therefore to be distinctly understood, that his only objects were the diminution of the patronage of the Crown, and the diminution of the public expenditure. That the latter object was to be obtained by agreeing to his motion, he would now proceed to show. By a paper which he held in his hand, and which any member might procure at the vote-office, it appeared that in 1797 the establishment of the war-office (exclusively of the contingencies) amounted to 10,850*l.* The expense of the same office was at present 21,000*l.*, exclusive of contingencies. The contingencies, separately, were 8,000*l.* so that 29,000*l.* might now be said to be the amount of expense incurred by that office. The difference between this expense, and that in 1797, was extremely great, the contingencies at that time amounting to little more than 2,000*l.* He by no means wished to hold it out that the whole of this sum would be a saving to the public, but still there might be a saving by the reduction which he proposed, and though not to a very great amount, yet such a one as the country ought to look to in its present state. The office might be classed under three heads—the office itself and its two branches. There were lord Bathurst, and those immediately under him, at an expense of 8,500*l.* a year, not including the clerks. There was then the war department, and opposite that the colonial department. And here it was that the discussion would arise, as from the estimates which had been made by ministers, it would be seen what it was they intended to reduce. The war department was reduced to 1,400*l.*, the whole being about 4,000*l.* and 2,500*l.* to be now taken from it, so that only 1,400*l.* of the expense of this department was to remain. The office would thus change its character, and become chiefly colonial. He remembered the defence that was formerly offered for continuing it, when he proposed its abolition, amounted to this, that it was really a war office; and that, had it been considered as a department for the colonies, it would have come under the scope of Mr. Burke's bill, and must have, in consistency with its provisions, been done away with. Now, since the war was ended, the ground was changed; and it must not be abolished, because it was intended more for conducting colonial than war business: so that, whether we had peace or war, whether one pretence or another was resorted to, the office must be continued, and the country must support its charges. He was willing to allow that there might be more colonial business now than there was when the business of the colonies was managed in the secretary of state's office for the home department; and in proposing that it should be again transferred to that office, and that the third secretary of state's department should be entirely abolished, he had no objection to make a motion, which he was sure would be agreeable to an hon. gentleman opposite (Mr. Goulburn), that he should be transferred along with it [A laugh]. He might be removed to the home department, with the care of the colonies, and a proper number of clerks. The head of the department, lord Bathurst, and his secretary, cost the nation about 8 or 9,000*l.* a year, including contingencies. By the plan he proposed there would be a saving of 12 or 14,000*l.* Was not this a saving deserving of attention? He might be told that the business of the colonies had increased so much since 1801, as to render this new office necessary to be continued for the colonies alone: the justice of this opinion he could not assent to. He would only desire gentlemen to look back to that period, and compare the list of our foreign establishments then and at the present moment, and they would find but little increase. We had then in the West Indies, Martinique, Guadaloupe, Essequibo, and most of the possessions that we had at present; we had likewise Malta at that time; we had since acquired in the Mediterranean, the Ionian islands, and in the east the Mauritius; but he did not think those acquisitions were sufficient to justify the continuance of an expensive office, otherwise declared to be unnecessary. The business of the Mauritius might be managed by the board of control. Some other business might be transferred to the same board. The secretary of state's office for the British empire might appear to convey the idea of immense and formidable employment, and certainly was a very sounding phrase; but little more business would arise, he was convinced, though this title again were adopted, and made to comprehend the executive management of the colonies, than could easily be conducted by the home department, with the accession of the hon. gentleman, the benefit of whose services he proposed to give it. There might now and then be a little business of great importance, and of a novel nature, such as a registry bill, but this could not often happen. There might be, he acknowledged, something alarming to ministers in a proposition to dismiss a cabinet minister; but he did not go so far as to propose such a measure. He would merely point out a transfer; and as there was a vacancy by the death of a noble lord at the head of the board of control, he would mention that place as a suitable provision for lord Bathurst. This would be a great saving to the public, and no change as affecting the situations of ministers who, he observed, should fairly divide the public business among themselves. This would not be turning any minister out of office, though he would not say the truth if he did not assert that it was his wish they should all be turned out as soon as possible [A laugh], but at the same time that he said this, he was willing to admit that lord Bathurst was a very good and efficient public officer. What he contended for was, that the war department being now so much reduced, and the home department having many heavy duties to attend to, which might be fairly considered to belong to the war department, the minister who presided over that department, should not be allowed to have all holiday time of it, now that the heavy duties of the office had ceased. It would not be fair to urge that, because the business of this department had been very heavy in time of war, and had been very well performed, the office should now be continued, when it was no longer necessary. There was a department, the reduction of which would, without any inconvenience, be attended with a saving of several thousand pounds in the year. Why, then, not make this saving? He knew it would be said, that the trouble of the situation was very great—that there was a vast deal of business to be done. It was very easy to make business appear very heavy, where a place was to be kept, and he asserted that there was no sinecure place in which it was not possible to make such an appearance and bustle of business for a short time, as would show some grounds why it should not be abolished [A laugh]. When he held the office of treasurer of the navy, he found by experience that it was easy to be busily employed for an hour or an hour and a half every day, in order to keep a situation [A laugh]. Nothing was more easy than to give orders to a clerk to make out some long returns, and to come down to the House in the evening with a large bundle of papers bound up with red tape, which it would appear had been arranged with vast labour and care [A laugh].—He mentioned this to show that several offices which were said to be very laborious might be discontinued, with little inconvenience to the public service. He thought that he had now made out that the third secretary of state's department might be abolished, and the expenses of it saved, with no inconvenience to the public service. If the office were now vacant, and if there were no objections to its abolition but the difficulty of carrying on the public service without it, he was sure the noble lord opposite, the secretary for the foreign department, and another noble lord who occupied the home department, would willingly take upon themselves all the functions which it imposed, and would jump at it for the sake of the patronage it yielded. They would willingly divide its duties to share its influence. But lord Bathurst was in the way, and this was their objection. He felt its force; and in order to obviate it, would take upon himself to provide for his lordship at the board of control. He would despair of attaining that saving for the public, which was the object of his present motion, considering that ministers had at first set themselves against a change, did he not derive some consolation from remembering, that, of late, the second thoughts of his majesty's government had been the best [A laugh]. This appeared to him a most important question. The House owed it to the country, and to the Prince Regent, to offer advice to the Crown, in conformity with the gracious recommendation of economy delivered from the throne. This appeared to him one of those necessary measures of economy, and the House would hear how it could be opposed consistently with its principles. He had made as clear a statement as he could, in order that every gentleman might learn the history of the office in question, and understand the reasons for its proposed discontinuance. Here the right hon. gentleman recapitulated his foregoing statements, and enlarged upon some of them. This was not the time for listening to the common arguments in behalf of what was called liberal establishments and proper splendour. We could now afford nothing for outward appearance. The House would not do its duty, if it did not agree to the proposed reduction; which would be important, not so much from the saving—although 12 or 14,000*l.* was a very considerable sum—as from the evidence that it would give of the principles that parliament cherished, and the motives by which it was actuated. He had made out a clear case for the consideration of the House. He was actuated by no party feelings on the present occasion; he acted with the utmost sincerity; he made his present proposition from motives of duty, and he hoped he would gain credit when he again repeated his declaration, that he would have brought it forward though his nearest and dearest friends had been in office. The right hon. gentleman concluded with moving,

"That an humble Address be presented to his royal highness the Prince Regent, to represent to his royal highness, that his majesty's faithful Commons, relying upon the gracious disposition of his royal highness to concur in all such measures of economy as may be consistent with the security of the country, humbly pray that his royal highness would be graciously pleased to give directions, that the division of the state offices made in 1794 (by which, in addition to the secretaries of state for the home and foreign departments, a secretary of state was constituted for the war department), be revised, and that the departments of the secretaries of state be, now that peace is happily restored, again placed, with all convenient dispatch, upon the footing on which they stood in 1793."

Mr. *Goulburn* observed, that after the ingenious statement made by the right hon. gentleman who had just sat down, he thought it incumbent on him to state the reasons why he objected *in toto* to the motion. He trusted that the House knew too well the value of the office which it was at present sought to abolish, to consent to give it up. He assured them, that he was as much disposed as any man to attend to every economical reduction which was consistent with public security, but it was bad economy, if indeed it was economy at all, to commence with the reduction of an office which exercised so salutary a control over our foreign colonies, as that to which the right hon. gentleman opposite had alluded. Bad government was no economy; and it would be bad government to reduce an office which had the care of so valuable a portion of our possessions as the colonies. The right hon. gentleman had endeavoured to impress on the House, that the home department had very little of heavy business at present, and to insist on a re-transfer of that business which they before transacted. He, however, would contend, that the home department had such a heavy duty to perform, that to give them the care of the colonial department would be to run the hazard of that department not being properly attended to. For the truth of this assertion he appealed to an hon. gentleman opposite (Mr. Wynn). He also contended that the importance of our colonial possessions was so great, that it was necessary to have a responsible minister of the Crown to superintend them. It would not be sufficient to say that those colonies should have the one half or one third of the attention of a minister—that would not be the proper mode of directing their important interests; neither would the increase of clerks which had been suggested, be sufficient. The colonies were important to this country in many particulars, and deserved the greatest attention. The House was aware that the trade with those colonies was important, that this country derived great resources from them, and that they therefore deserved the attention of having a responsible minister to superintend them. As to the suggestion of having a part of the colonial business transferred to the board of control, he could not approve of it, and he thought it would not be agreed to by the East India company. There was this objection to the transfer of the colonial business to the home department—that it would expose the interests of the former to neglect. For it was a fact that the business nearest at hand would be always soonest attended to, and this might produce a neglect of the foreign business. For a proof of this he would refer the House to the time when the colonial business was transacted by the home department, and comparing it with the subsequent period when it was made a separate establishment, they would find that it had been more efficiently attended to than at any preceding time. All the attention which had been paid to the situation of the blacks, had been given since the colonial was made a separate department, and it could not have been so efficiently given if it were left to the home department. With regard to the saving which it was said would be made by this change, he did not think it would compensate for the loss which would arise to the interests of the colonies. He denied that the increase of clerks would be sufficient, because, besides not being efficient in deciding on every case which would come before them, they would require a superintendent. He concluded by repeating his assertion, that the importance of those colonies was too great to suffer their interests to be managed by any other than a responsible adviser of the Crown.

Mr. *Wynn* said the hon. gentleman having stated the inability of the home department to take any great increase of business, and having appealed to him on that subject, he rose, not so much to argue the question, as to bear testimony to what he knew of the duties of the office, which he could assure the House he should do with the same sincerity as if he were speaking on oath in a court of justice. When he was in the office for the home department, he found the amount of the business there was this: the superintendence of the volunteers and militia was entrusted to one under secretary, and the superintendence of police and aliens to another under secretary. The whole of the labour of the volunteers was now taken away; and that of the militia was also nearly altogether taken away. There was also now a great diminution of duty in the business of superintending aliens. During the year he was in office as large a portion of the business as any other, was that connected with aliens—that must be now extremely diminished; for there was no necessity for the same superintendence of foreigners during peace as during war. He had no scruple in saying, that the business of the home office was now very much diminished, and might admit of considerable reduction. Ireland could not now add much to the business of the office. From the home department, there having been subtracted the whole of the business relating to the volunteers, and almost the whole relating to the militia, and from the great diminution of the alien business, and also of the Irish business, it was his opinion that the business of the colonies, as had been the case in the memory of most of them, might be transferred to that department without any injury to the public service.—It had been said by the hon. gentleman, that if the charge of the colonies should be given to the same minister who had the charge of the home police, the former would be sure to be neglected, as attention would chiefly be given to that which was the more pressing. If this objection were made to the uniting the colonies with the war department, there might be something in it. It might then be said with some show of justice, that in a great campaign, on which the fate of Europe and the civilized world depended, it would be ill-judged in the extreme to add to the charge of the minister entrusted with its superintendence a duty which would incessantly draw his attention from it. He felt confident, that in the consolidation of the business of the colonies with that of the home department, neither the one nor the other would be neglected. In 1806, during the illness of Mr. Fox, lord Spencer was obliged to take in addition to the home department, that of the foreign office for some time. No doubt the united business of the two offices must have been sufficiently laborious; but, however, it was discharged. Surely if this could be done in a time of war without any injury to the public service, the business of the colonies might now be easily added to that of the home department. The hon. gentleman had stated the very great increase of business, arising from the late addition to our colonies, to be such as to render a third secretary of state absolutely necessary. Let the House go a little farther back. Was there never, he would ask, a period when we had as many colonies as at present? [Never,—said Mr. Goulburn across the table]. What, not when we had nearly the whole continent of North America? Was not at that time the whole business of the country discharged by two secretaries of state? [Hear, hear!]. It had been asked, did not the colonies deserve to be now, as well as heretofore, under the superintendence of a cabinet minister? Did his right hon. friend ask any thing inconsistent with this? Did he ask that they should be entrusted to the sole control of an under secretary? He wished to say a word or two as to the business of the colonial department being sufficient of itself to occupy one minister exclusively. If this was the case he would then say, that the business of the office must have been strangely neglected last year, when, in addition to his own duty, that of the foreign secretary had been discharged by my lord Bathurst. Surely, if lord Bathurst found it possible to discharge the duties of his own office and those of the foreign secretary for a considerable period, now that the duties of his own office were diminished one half by the cessation of the war, his time could not be sufficiently occupied. He could state therefore with certainty, that the business of the office of war and colonies having been diminished one half by the peace, and the half of the business of the secretary for the home department having also expired by the war—each of these departments having lost one half, they might be consolidated with the utmost advantage to the public. He had not the same knowledge of the board of control, and therefore he could not enter so circumstantially into that part of the question. The hon. gentleman had expressed an apprehension lest the proposed addition to the business of the board of control might give rise to something like rebellion on the part of the East India company—they would exclaim, we have a right to one whole and undivided minister. Now, he would ask, when lord Melville was president of the board of control, did he not also execute the duties of one of the secretaries of state? Was there any complaint, while that noble lord filled the office of president of the board of control, and that which was stated by the right hon. gentleman opposite (Mr. Rose) to be very laborious, but which his right hon. friend had stated to be very easy, namely the treasurership of the navy,—that that noble lord did not find means to discharge the duties of the combined offices in such a way as that there should be no excess of business in any one department? The business having not then run into arrear, it proved that one man could discharge more business than belonged exclusively to the present board of control. He could see no reason, therefore, why the business of the secretary of state for the colonies should not be divided between the board of control and the home department. One colony ought certainly to belong to the home department—he meant New South Wales. It now, however, stood exactly on the same footing as any other colony. He believed that great benefit would be derived to this colony, by its being placed under the person who was at the head of the police of this country. In every point of view, therefore, in which he could regard this question, he thought the proposed alteration must be beneficial. He did not conceive they could justify themselves to their constituents, if, when public economy was so material a consideration, the House should not avail itself of the present occasion for giving a practical example of it. One of the best securities for the public service was, that all its officers should be fully employed, because it was then most probable that the offices themselves would be filled by active and efficient individuals.

Mr. *Addington* said, he was very much surprised at the statements of the hon. member who had spoken last. What had been said by his hon. friend (Mr. Goulbourn) was, that the business of the colonies was of late years much increased. In answer to this, the hon. gentleman referred to the period when our colonies included the whole States of America; but the hon. gentleman seemed to forget that when this was the case there had been a third secretary of state, called the "Secretary for America and the Colonies." The hon. gentleman was also quite mistaken as to the quantity of business now transacted in the home department. In the alien office, since the hon. gentleman had been in it, the business had increased by one-third. Of this he could speak positively, from his official situation. The correspondence in the home department was more extensive than many hon. gentlemen could conceive—there was correspondence with the admiralty and other public departments—with all the magistrates of the kingdom, besides the superintendence of the police of the metropolis. When the right hon. gentleman proposed to unite the business of the colonial department with that of the home department, or of the board of control, he showed himself either totally ignorant or forgetful of the great increase of business in every one of these departments. It would be quite impossible that the business could be executed if any of them were united. The fatigue already suffered by those who were connected with each of these offices, was as great as could be borne. The business of the home department was so great, that his noble relation had not been absent from his office ten days in the course of any one year; and he could assure the right hon. gentleman, that the duties were quite sufficient to occupy his time. Every person who called at the office, on business, was desired to state his case; and he received the fullest possible information on the matter in which he was interested. With respect to the office he unworthily held, he could assure the House, that it was not until after two days serious consideration, and the present request of his noble relation, that he accepted of it.

Mr. *Marryat* was of opinion, that the business of the colonial department was sufficient to occupy the present establishment. He believed instead of a reduction being made in that department, it would be found necessary to add to it, very considerably, in consequence of the system lately acted on. Government had departed from the ancient system, and had lately proceeded on the principle of retaining, in the colonies which became ours by conquest or treaty, the laws which the power that last possessed them had administered. They had Spanish laws at Trinidad—Dutch laws at Demerara, Berbice, and Essequibo—French laws at St. Lucia—the laws of the king of Candy at Ceylon—Maltese laws in the island of Malta—and he knew not how many other codes of laws were to be found in the range of the colonies. It appeared to him, that if this state of things was to remain, the persons at the head of the colonial department ought to be acquainted with all the languages in which these laws were expressed, and that the members of the privy council, before whom colonial questions might be brought, as a court of the last appeal, would require a similar knowledge. But besides the expense thus occasioned, and the qualifications which a minister was required to possess, there were many other points of view of great consequence. The King of Great Britain being absolute in some of these colonies, if he was ambitious, he might acquire means for being equally absolute in his other dominions. In Trinidad, for instance, his power of raising revenue was unlimited—the taxes of that island had been trebled. This was a revenue altogether beyond the control of parliament. Formerly, by extending our laws to our colonies, we had extended to them our spirit: they had been always ready to defend themselves. But now it was found necessary to have garrisons, to keep the colonies themselves in awe. The situation of the colonies requiring the support of large military establishments, would necessarily increase the business in this department. Under these circumstances, he thought it absolutely impossible that the country could dispense with the business of the colonial department being transacted as it now was. But for his own part he was for returning to the old system of the country; and if the right hon. gentleman, instead of his present motion, was to substitute one for an address to the Crown to adopt the same measures for the administration of the affairs of the colonies which had been directed in the proclamation of the great lord Chatham in 1763, and would thus cause the whole of the colonies to have but one set of laws, then he would cordially support such a motion, and he would agree that the business of the department would no longer be so extensive as to require its being maintained in a separate shape. But the variety of knowledge now required, as to the different laws and languages, made such an arrangement inconsistent with the interests of the country. If the present system was to be continued, it was impossible to dispense with a separate department for the administration of the colonies; none but a cabinet minister should be at the head of the department, and holding this opinion, he could not vote for the motion.

Sir *John Newport* was at a loss to know whether this introduction of the knowledge of laws and languages necessary for a colonial secretary, was intended as a matter of ridicule or not. If it was necessary, as the hon. gentleman seemed to suppose, that so many qualifications should be possessed by the secretary for the colonial department, very few persons, he believed, would be found competent to fill it. With respect to the proclamation which the hon. gentleman said had been issued during the administration of lord Chatham, in 1763, his statement was erroneous. Lord Chatham was out of power before that period, and the proclamation in question was sent forth whilst Mr. Grenville was at the head of the department. The question before the House came to this point—an assurance had been given from the throne, that every possible reduction would be made in the expenditure of the country—that a principle of strict economy would be acted on—and now an opportunity was offered, of saving 12,000*l.* per annum to the public. Would the House, then, go up with an address to the Prince Regent, praying that the reduction should take place; or, by refusing to do so, would they perpetuate an office which, in his opinion, was unnecessary, and thus violate the pledge given to the people?

Mr. *Bathurst* contended, that the foreign colonies which we had received, and especially the island of Trinidad, were not yet in a condition to receive the benefits of the British constitution; and it was admitted by the hon. gentleman, that if the British laws were not extended to them, the business of our colonies would be sufficient to occupy the attention of one individual. It did not follow, because the home department had been relieved from the business of the militia, that that business amounted to half of the duty of the office—a great part of that business had been done by clerks. Though the third secretary of state was now relieved from the business of the war, enough remained to justify the continuance of his office. When his noble friend (lord Castlereagh) was abroad, exertions had been made to meet that emergency, and if there had been neglect it was justified by the imperious necessity of the case. Much, too, of the business was then transacted by his noble friend himself at the foreign court where he was then residing. The dilemma was not a necessary consequence that the business was neglected, and was transacted by the noble lord without consultation with his colleagues. The short question before the House was, whether the business of the colonies was not enough for one person? It was his opinion that it was, and that the consequence of annexing it to the home department would be, that either the one branch or the other would be neglected, or cast upon subordinate officers; for the business of the home department had increased one-third in the course of the last ten years. He saw no more reason for transferring the business of any part of the colonies to the board of control than to the admiralty, or any other department quite unconnected with the colonies. The right hon. gentleman then contended, that much inconvenience would result from consolidating the colonial with the home department. It did appear to him, when they considered the great increase of our possessions, which had lately taken place, that such a proceeding would be highly objectionable. If the business connected with those colonies was properly performed, it would not only demand a great portion of time, but also of judgment and ability. Looking to the immense accession of the duties which had devolved on the colonial department, and considering the constant series of business which the home department necessarily had to transact, it remained for the House to say, whether the consolidation of the offices ought to be recommended. With respect to the question of economy, it was not sufficient to say, that a sum of money would be saved by doing away with one of those offices. The point to be considered was, whether that retrenchment could be made, without injury to the public interest. As he thought it could not, he should oppose the motion.

Mr. *J. H. Smyth* said, that as he had had an opportunity of being acquainted with the business of the offices of secretary of state, he did not wish to give a silent vote on the present occasion. It was to be recollected that this office of third secretary had been abolished in 1782, by Mr. Burke's bill, after which it was not renewed till 1794, when Mr. Dundas had the administration of the home department, the war and colonies, which at that time were evidently too much for one person to attend to. The business of the war was then taken from him, and formed into a third department, the colonies still remaining attached to the home department. This was the case till the short peace, when the business of the war department failing, the colonies were transferred to it to keep up the office. He now believed that the business which the third secretary had lost by the peace was more than equal to the whole business of the home department at the present time; and if he were asked whether he thought one secretary enough for both offices, his answer would be, in his conscience, he believed it was. In a report of the finance committee, over which the Speaker had presided with so much ability, it was stated, that the necessity for the office of third secretary of state would depend on the continuance of the war, and the state in which the country was left on the return of peace; but that it was desirable that this office should be reduced as soon as it could be done consistently with the convenience of the public service. It had been said, that the business of the home department had increased one-third. How this could be the case, now the business of the militia was removed, was inexplicable. He could not help suspecting that the motion of his right hon. friend would be rejected; and he was sorry for it, both for the sake of the House and the country. If there were any one opinion more deeply and widely impressed on the public mind than another, it was this—that economy was essentially necessary in every ratification of the public service. If ministers were not impressed with this truth—if they opposed themselves, on this point, to the voice of the country, he conceived they were neither honest counsellors of the Crown, nor sincere friends of the people.

Mr. *Bankes*, after complimenting the right hon. mover on the manly and candid manner in which he had brought forward the question, observed, that he always felt a disposition to agree to every proposition, the object of which was public economy, and it was not without doubt and difficulty that he had come to the determination, that it was not consistent with the convenience of public business to abolish the office under debate. He was not led to this determination by the circumstance, that this office was not included in the bills which he had brought into the House, because those bills had been drawn up in time of war when there could have been no question of abolishing that office. He was afraid that in endeavouring to save the expense of this office, and to effect a consequent reduction of patronage, the House would cause considerable inconvenience to the public service. He agreed with the 16th report of the finance committee, that the continuance of this office should depend on the state in which the country was left in time of peace. What was the state in which the country had been left? With a great increase of colonies beyond what could have been in the contemplation of that committee. The right hon. mover was aware of this, and he had proposed to call in the assistance of an office which had been appointed for quite different purposes, the board of control. It was desirous that a uniform system should be adopted with respect to the colonies, and he therefore thought it unadvisable that any of them should be put under the same officer as the Company's possessions in India. Then with regard to the saving, he did not think it could be considerable, because an addition would be requisite to the salary of the president of the board of control, for his additional service, and there would be a great increase of clerks required. The expense would probably be as great as at present, and the system would be less convenient. In his exertions on the subject of public economy, he had always endeavoured to recommend, that the efficient officers should be fairly and amply paid, and those offices which were useless should be abolished. Why, for instance, should the two justices in Eyre be continued so long after their duties had ceased? On the other hand, in the efficient offices of the state, the duties had increased in a large proportion. In the treasury the business of late years had doubled; and he was convinced that the colonial business was so increased as to require the whole attention of one secretary. As he thought, therefore, that it would be inconvenient to throw this business on the other departments, he could not agree to the motion. It was always agreeable to him to support a measure, the object of which was economy, but he did not think the office under consideration was one of the first which should be reduced.

Mr. *Ponsonby* said, he did not doubt but that the hon. gentleman who had spoken last had come to the decision which he had formed with much difficulty, and he did not suppose that his objection to the motion arose from its having been made by his right hon. friend, and not by the hon. gentleman himself; but it was extraordinary, that the hon. gentleman did never or very rarely agree to any motions on the subject of economy which did not originate with himself [Loud cries of Hear!]. As to the passage in the 16th report, on the propriety or impropriety of abolishing this office, it must depend on the state in which the country was left, at the conclusion of the war. What, then, was that situation? It was a situation, if they took the word of his majesty's ministers for it, and he had no reason to doubt their assertion, of perfect external safety—one in which they had nothing to dread from the enmity of any power in Europe. It was a state which warranted them in looking forward to permanent tranquillity, to as extended a period of peace as the mutability of human affairs could allow them to hope for. This was the state of our external relations. How, then, did we stand at home? If abroad all was peace and security, our state at home was one of unparalleled and unexampled distress—a state in which no man felt the blessings or enjoyments of peace—and in which the public burthens of the state pressed heavier on the community than they did in the hottest period of the war. Was this a state that required strict economy, or was it not? The hon. gentleman said, we had more colonial possessions now than we ever had before. With great deference to his knowledge, he must deny the fact. It was not so. Before the separation of North America from the mother country, Great Britain had more colonies, more business to transact connected with them, and, consequently, more necessity for a colonial department, than any man could say existed at present. Now, during all the time of the connexion of the thirteen American provinces with Great Britain, down to the year 1768, when America was in rebellion against this country, there was no additional officer created for transacting the business of that department.—Would any man, then, gravely get up and state to the House, that a necessity now existed for that officer, because there was more colonial business to transact at present, than there was before 1768 [Hear, hear!]. The hon. gentleman had said, that no saving would be effected by the plan of his right hon. friend, because he would transfer so many duties to the president of the board of control, as would make the office as expensive as that of the third secretary of state was at present; and he thought it unseemly for a superintendant of any of his majesty's colonies to be placed under an officer of the East India company, and paid by them. The hon. gentleman did not appear to give his understanding fair play on this occasion. What! could he denominate him the officer of the East India company, whose situation was created for the purpose of controlling that body? What matter by whom he was paid—what matter by whom the money was disbursed—he was clearly an officer of the Crown, appointed under an act of parliament, for the superintendance of Indian affairs, and not an officer of the Company. The Company were compelled to pay the salary—they could not withhold it. They had no control over the president, though he had a control over them. And where would be the incongruity of transferring the Cape of Good Hope, Ceylon, and the Mauritius, to the control of him who had all Hindostan, wherever the charter of the Company extended, under his jurisdiction?—Was it fit to intrust all Hindostan to him, and to refuse him jurisdiction over the places he had mentioned? With respect to the course pursued by his right hon. friend, the hon. gentleman seemed to have mistaken it. He imposed no measure on his majesty's ministers. He told them to arrange the business in the best way they could. They might adopt the suggestion of his right hon. friend, and add certain of the colonies to the department of the board of control. This was a suggestion. But his right hon. friend did say, that there was a peculiar aptitude in the present time, for making this addition to the duties of the board of control; because that office being vacant, the individual who was next appointed to it, could not object to the alteration. With respect to the other colonies, why could not the two remaining secretaries do the duties appertaining to them? That was the course pursued in former times. It was said, that part of the duties were not well performed, in those times—that some negligence was manifested. This observation, he thought, was not fair. It was not just to cast reflections on the conduct of those who had probably paid the debt of nature. This was no just ground on which to oppose the motion. In former days, all the duties (and they were considerably more than he would now impose on the existing officers), were discharged by the two secretaries, not only without injury, but with great benefit to the country. The least saving proposed by his right hon. friend amounted to 12,000*l.* a year, a sum at all times worth the attention of parliament, but more particularly at the present moment, and in the present circumstances of the country. He was not disposed to throw out reflections against any one, or to charge gentlemen with making professions of economy upon which they were not disposed to act. But this he would say, that when a case occurred in which 12,000*l.* might be saved to the public, it would require stronger arguments than any he had yet heard to convince him that it ought not to be done; and if stronger arguments were not given, the majority of this country would think that the House was not in earnest in its professions.

Lord *Castlereagh* expressed his perfect readiness to admit that the subject was one of fair parliamentary consideration, and that the right hon. gentleman had brought it forward in a very candid and manly way. He must, however, most distinctly deny that the right hon. gentleman, or any of the hon. gentlemen by whom the proposition was supported, had advanced any arguments which were at all calculated to impress the House with the conviction, that in the present circumstances, the abolition of the office of the secretary of state for the war and colonial department, was a measure, which, with a liberal and comprehensive view of the true interests of the country, it would be wise or expedient to adopt. In the comparison which the right hon. gentleman had instituted between the nature and amount of the colonial business at the present time, and its nature and amount at former periods, he was by no means borne out by facts. No one who considered the subject with any attention, but must be convinced, that that important branch of the public service had doubled in extent since the year 1782, and therefore that the arguments which the right hon. gentleman quoted as having been used by Mr. Burke in that year, when he successfully proposed the abolition of the office then known by the name of the colonial secretaryship, were not at all applicable to the present question. Whoever contemplated the existing condition of our colonial possessions, must feel how considerably those possessions had risen in importance since the period to which he had just alluded. The policy on which the government and the legislature of this country had acted was founded on the conviction, that it would not be wise to permit the erection of a local authority in the shape of a parliament in all the colonies of which Great Britain had obtained possession. The consequence was, that the superintending control of the colonial secretary of state had been augmented to a degree wholly unprecedented, and with which the superintending control of the colonial secretary, at the close of the American war, could bear no sort of comparison. The motion of the right hon. gentleman proceeded on what he (lord Castlereagh) must consider a principle of false economy. In the present state of the public business, when so many and such important considerations came within the purview of his majesty's government, it was his conviction, and he was persuaded it would be the conviction of parliament, that the responsible ministers at the head of the different departments of the public service, in order to be efficient, ought not to be overcharged with business. They ought to be men, not merely qualified to go through the routine of office, but possessing minds capable of exclusive devotion to the important question over which they enjoyed the control, and capable, through the medium of a liberal comprehension of the public interests, of devising measures by which those interests might be most eminently advanced. When any important public officer had, by the application of his powers to such a particular object, obtained the means of materially improving that part of the public service over which he presided, it was, he repeated, a false economy, which would recommend such a packing of offices together, as would deprive the country of the advantages which their separation seemed to promise. Relieved as we were from the efforts, from the expense, and from the dangers of war, it was our duty to attend with vigilance to the amelioration of our pacific interests in every part of the world. In this view of the subject, he would maintain, without the fear of contradiction by those who possessed the best means of information, that there was no mind equal to the superintendance of both the home and colonial departments, if any thing more than a superficial discharge of the technicalities of those offices was necessary, and if it was deemed requisite (as in his opinion it unquestionably was), that individuals placed in those important offices of the state should go to the bottom of the questions which came under their consideration, should understand all their most minute details, and should bend their exclusive attention to the means of improving the good which might offer itself, and of remedying the evils that must occur. This was a very different thing from the mere mechanical discharge of duty which must take place, when more was imposed upon any individual than a single human mind could be expected to embrace.—So much for the principle of the economy recommended by the right hon. gentleman. As to the amount, he was far from undervaluing the sum; but even looking at it, according to the representations of the right hon. gentleman himself, it was not one which ought to be put in competition with a public advantage, much less than that which the continuance of the office secured. If the office of secretary of state for the colonial department should be suppressed, it would become necessary to provide for the officers who were attached to it by superannuation. Unless, therefore, parliament clearly saw their way through the states, both of war and of peace—unless they were satisfied that in the event of a new war it would be unnecessary to re-constitute this office—it would be most unwise, with a view to economy, now to abolish it. Nothing could be a more expensive public process than to suppress an office, the re-creation of which became subsequently indispensable. For his own part, he was perfectly persuaded, that if the three secretaryships of state now existing were cut down into two, the public business could not be efficiently and advantageously conducted, even in peace, and that in war it must absolutely stand still. The consequence would be, that in the event of war the office must be revived. On the return of peace new superannuations must take place, and so on, until an expense would be incurred infinitely greater than that attendant on the steady maintenance of the present establishment. The advantage of continuing the third secretaryship of state would appear still more evident, if the possibility of the temporary incapacity for public service, either by illness or otherwise, of either of the other two secretaries was contemplated. Should such an occurrence take place after the reduction of the third secretary, it would be utterly impossible for the single secretary who would then be left, to keep the functions of government in motion. The mode adopted by the hon. gentleman opposite, of reasoning from particular cases, was very inconclusive. It by no means followed, that because the late lord Melville had combined the discharge of the duties of two offices, that such a combination was to be expected from other individuals. It was well known that that noble lord had enjoyed a faculty for the performance of public business, greater, perhaps, than that possessed by any other person in the world. It by no means followed that it would be wise to make his mind the measure of the arrangements necessary for the public service, or to settle that as a permanent principle applicable to all cases which was applicable only to that single exception. Under all the circumstances of the case, whether the House considered the question with a view to the security which ought to be obtained for the able and efficient performance of the duties of the most important offices in the government, or whether they looked to the limited saving that must accrue from endangering, or rather rendering impossible, such an able and efficient performance, he trusted that they would not hesitate to negative the proposition of the right hon. gentleman.

Mr. *Rose* cautioned gentlemen not to be led away by the bold assertions made on the other side. One right hon. gentleman had said, that the business of the three secretaries of state was now much less than at the period when we possessed our American colonies; but he (Mr. Rose) had a distinct belief that such was by no means the fact. He wished to address a few words more especially to the right hon. mover of the present question, who, when treasurer of the navy, had found so little to do, that he had never been employed two hours in the day. Mr. Rose said, that he should have been much surprised if the right hon. gentleman could have found any thing to occupy himself even for a quarter of an hour in the day: for he had left behind him no trace of the discharge of any of the duties of treasurer of the navy but the signature of his name, four times a year, to the receipt for his salary—[Hear, hear! and a laugh.] Well might the right hon. gentleman maintain that that place was a sinecure, for one man would be perfectly competent to the discharge of the duties of two, three, four, or five such places. Mr. Rose begged to assure the House, that, in his hands, the business of the office had been very different—[Hear, hear! and continued laughter.] So laborious was it, that when he retired into the country, he protested that he was under the necessity of occupying many hours of the day in the discharge of his accumulated duties—[Hear, hear! from all sides.] He declared again, that this was the fact, and if any hon. gentleman doubted it, he had nothing to do but to make inquiries of the paymaster, who would prove that of late years the treasurership of the navy had become a most arduous situation.

Lord *Folkestone* said, he was old-fashioned enough to think that some weight was due to an act of parliament which ministers seemed to set at nought: while Mr. Burke's bill continued on the statute-book, the office of third secretary must be illegal in time of peace, and those who supported the continuance of that place would do well to bring forward a motion to repeal an act which they were notoriously contravening. In 1782 the office was suppressed; in 1794 it was revived as the secretaryship for war, its advocates contending that Mr. Burke's bill was only directed against the secretaryship for the colonies. In process of time some of the duties of the home department being given to the secretary for foreign affairs, a part of the business of the colonies devolved upon the secretary of war, and he was called secretary for war and the colonies. Now peace was restored, of course all his war functions were at an end, and it was admitted that he could now only be called secretary for the colonies; so that it could not be denied that it was in direct opposition to the bill of Mr. Burke, which declared that the place should thereafter be utterly "abolished, suppressed, and taken away." The next clause provided, that if it should ever afterwards be revived, it should be deemed a new office; and the ministers were consequently in the dilemma, that no person could be appointed to it, and at the same time be a member of the House of Commons. This sort of penalty was deemed a sufficient security against the renewal of the office. As to the time when this motion was made, it was impossible that any could be chosen when the language of the preamble of the act of 1782 would more strongly apply: it was passed "from a desire on the part of his majesty to relieve his people, and to discharge the debt on the civil list without new burthens, as well as to introduce a better system of economy than had hitherto prevailed, and to secure more effectually the freedom and independence of parliament." For all these reasons the office of third secretary had been abolished; and which of them at the present moment would not apply with double force?

Mr. *Tierney* began his reply by noticing the allusion of the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Rose) to his conduct while he held the office of treasurer of the navy. He did undoubtedly presume to say, as he conscientiously believed, that the office of treasurer of the navy was a complete sinecure, and consequently a useless expense to the country; but in this he stated nothing more than what appeared in the report of a committee of that House, of which sir Francis Baring was chairman. For this report distinctly denominated this office as a sinecure, observing, however, that if the person holding the office was employed in performing other public duty of aedquate importance, he might be allowed to retain the salary. The right hon. gentleman (continued Mr. Tierney) asserts with his usual correctness, that the only trace I left behind me, when I filled that place, of the execution of any business, was the signature of my name four times a-year for my salary. Now, the fact, unluckily for me, is, that I only received the salary for three quarters [Hear, hear! and a laugh]. At that time I was a poor man, and a poor man I continue to be; and I might have some excuse for receiving the money, even were it true that I did nothing to earn it. But what is the situation of the right hon. gentleman? What excuse has he to offer? he who is burthened with emoluments taken out of the public purse [Hear, hear!]—the calculation of the amount of whose sinecures is the most difficult duty he has to discharge [Hear, hear!]—who makes a boast that they are so numerous, that even his retirement in the country is broken in upon by correspondence regarding them [Hear, hear!.] Surely, it is a little too much that the right hon. gentleman should not only hold all these places, but should boast of them in the face of the Commons of England, who annually vote the money for his payment! Let me ask him if he is not clerk to the other House of parliament?—a place that his children hold in reversion. Let him state the emoluments he derives from that. Let me ask him if he does not hold another sinecure in the court of common pleas; and let him state the emoluments of that [Hear, hear!]. Let me ask him if he is not possessed of a third sinecure in the record office; and, after he has estimated the value of these, and all the other places he has obtained, let him twit me with having signed my name for three quarters salary, while I happened to be treasurer of the navy [continued cheers from all sides]. He asserts that I did no good in the office; let him ask the clerks how I conducted myself [Hear, hear!].

Mr. *Houblon*, while the House was in great confusion, rose to speak to order. He could not help thinking that this attack upon the right hon. gentleman was irrelevant to the question in debate.—[much laughter and confusion]. Mr.

Methuen rose, but again took his seat, the House being in a state of great disorder [cries of Houblon, Methuen, Chair, &c].

The *Speaker*, as soon as order was restored, said, It does not appear to me that the hon. member has alleged any thing to show that the right hon. gentleman was out of order. Therefore, I call upon that right hon. gentleman to proceed [loud cheers].

Mr. *Tierney* resumed, and remarked that the hon. member who thought proper to interrupt him on the ground of irrelevancy, might have been in order had he risen sooner, and interrupted his right hon. friend near him, when he was making the attack to which he (Mr. T.) was endeavouring, for his own vindication, to offer some reply. But to proceed to the right hon. gentleman.—He declares that I was a most negligent, and that he is a most active and efficient treasurer of the navy. As to myself, that may be a point not easily settled here; but I confidently refer to every clerk in the office to say whether the business was ever better done than when I was at the head of it [Hear, hear!]. I do not praise myself—the credit was due to the paymaster; for to me the place was, to all intents and purposes, a sinecure. I allow that it would not be very difficult to make it otherwise by harassing all the clerks, and interfering in matters with which the treasurer has no concern; and that I believe is the fact with the right hon. gentleman. I understand that he has introduced some regulations, originating, no doubt, in a good motive, which have given a great deal of trouble, and done no good, and only showed a certain degree of restlessness, of which, I confess, I do not envy the possessor [Hear, hear!]. I state, that as far as related to that office, I was perfectly idle, whatever may be the fact with the right hon. gentleman. I made no ostentatious display of minutes, though I do recollect a new regulation which I introduced in concert with the paymaster, from which important benefits did result. If the right hon. gentleman will but give me credit for being idle, I will give him credit for doing his utmost to ferret out employment [Hear! and a laugh]—Mr. Tierney then proceeded to notice the arguments in support of his motion, which were called bold assertions, from believing which a right hon. gentleman had wisely cautioned the House. He contended that this was the opportunity for giving a practical answer to that part of the speech of the Prince Regent which held out a promise of concurrence in economical arrangements, parliament not having yet saved the people a single halfpenny, every retrenchment being compelled by what the noble lord called the clamour of the people. He lamented that an hon. member (Mr. Bankes) had not stood forward to carry into effect the main object of his parliamentary life, and that he had wasted his censure upon justices in Eyre, and other paltry sinecures, instead of attacking with vigour the continuance of the useless office in question. The chief answer attempted had been grounded upon the circumstances of the peace, it being held by the other side both stable and unstable, as best suited a present purpose. Under the name of secretary for the colonies it had been clearly abolished; and when revived, it was called the secretary of war, and in that capacity the noble lord (Castlereagh) had appeared in the House at the time of the celebrated expedition to Walcheren—of the credit of which he (Mr. T.) would not on any account deprive the noble lord.—He then proceeded to re-state some of the grounds on which he had rested his motion, as he saw many members present who did not hear his opening speech. If a select committee were appointed to inquire, and a case were made out to justify the continuance of the office of third secretary, he would undertake never again to open his lips in parliament. He contended that two secretaries of state were enough for the discharge of all the public business. The noble lord had said, that lord Sidmouth could not go through all the business which lord Melville had conducted; but it should be remembered, that lord Melville not only went through the business of the home department and the colonial department, but also revised the whole system of the East India company, and renewed their charter. He insisted, therefore, that this 12,000*l.* a-year was a certain dead pressure on the public. If any doubt existed on this point, he would say,—refer this to a committee, and you will then see who is right and who is wrong; but do not be borne down by the assertions of gentlemen in office. He had heard no answer whatever to his statement, except what the noble lord had given. The noble lord had said, that no person could be found equally capable of business as lord Melville; but he (Mr. T.) believed there were a hundred lord Melvilles at every corner of the street who would regulate what related to the colonial department. What great acts were these profound gentlemen going to perform? He would venture to say, that they would be content to proceed in the ordinary manner, and like him, to leave no minutes in their offices. The noble lord was now brought to the test; and what was much more to the purpose, so was the House of Commons. It was evident that the noble lord and his colleagues would do nothing, unless the vote of that House compelled them. The country, however, expected to be relieved from some of those heavy burthens which they had sustained during the war, and this was one of those useless offices which ought to be abolished. All these things ought to be inquired into, and (added Mr. Tierney) they must be inquired into, or the country will not be satisfied. Very little had been yet effected; but if the people of England, and their representatives in that House, would faithfully discharge their respective duties, economy and retrenchment must take place. The opposition which the noble lord and his colleagues had made to this motion would hold them up in their true colours to the country. For his own part he believed that neither the noble lord nor his colleagues would ever adopt any measures of economy till they were driven to do so from necessity; and he hoped that necessity would be powerfully enforced that night. He had taken what he conceived to be the mildest and the fairest course to all parties, in moving an address to the Prince Regent; and he could not persuade himself but that there were many independent members in that House who would feel that it was no party question.

Mr. *Houblon* said a few words, but amidst so much noise in the House that he could not be distinctly heard. All that we collected was, that he wished to defend Mr. Rose against some observations of the right hon. gentleman who had just sat down. He thought, that a person who had passed so long a life in the service of his country ought not to be too severely animadverted on. This produced much laughter from the opposite side, and the remainder of the hon. member's speech was quite inaudible. When he sat down, the cries of question became general, and the House divided:—

For the motion 100
Against it 182

List of the Minority.

Abercrombie, hon. J.
Althorp, visc.
Anson, hon. G.
Brand, hon. T.
Barham, Jos. F.
Baring, sir Thos.
Baring, Alex.
Baker, John
Bennet, hon. H. G.
Birch, Joseph
Bolland, John
Brougham, H.
Burrell, hon. P. D.
Byng, George
Calcraft, John
Calvert, Nic.
Calvert, Charles
Campbell, gen.
Cavendish, hon. H.
Caulfield, hon. H.
Carew, R. S.
Cocks, hon. J. S.
Creevey, Thos.
Curwen, J. C.
Duncannon, visc.
Dundas, hon. L.
Dundas, Charles
Ebrington, visc.
Elliot, rt. hon. W.
Fazarkerley, N.
Fergusson, sir R. C.
Fitzroy, lord J.
Folkestone, visc.
Fremantle, Wm.
Fynes, Henry
Gordon, R.
Grenfell, Pascoe
Grant, J. P.
Hamilton, sir H. D.
Heron, sir R.
Hornby, E.
Howard, hon. W.
Hughes, W. L.
Jervois, G. P.
Knox, Thos.
Lambton, John G.
Langton, W. G.
Leader, Wm.
Lemon, sir W.
Lloyd, J. M.
Lyttelton, hon. W.
Macdonald, J.
Maitland, hon. A.
Markham, admiral
Martin, John
Methuen, Paul
Milton, visc.
Molyneux, H. H.
Monck, sir C.
Moore, P.
Morland, S. B.
Morpeth, visc.
Neville, hon. R.
Newport, sir J.
Newman, Wm.
Northey, Wm.
North, Dudley
Nugent, lord
O'Hara, Charles
Ossulston, lord
Osborne, lord F.
Palmer, Charles
Peirse, H.
Ponsonby, rt. hon. G.
Powlett, hon. W.
Prittie, hon. F. A.
Pym, Francis
Ramsden, J. C.
Ridley, sir M. W.
Romilly, sir S.
Russell, lord W.
Russell, lord G. W.
Scudamore, R. P.
Sefton, earl of
Sharp, R.
Smith, Samuel
Smith, Abel
Smith, W.
Sebright, sir John
Tavistock, marquis
Taylor, Charles
Tierney, rt. hon. G.
Thompson, Thos.
Townshend, lord C.
Tremayne, J. H.
Warre, J. A.
Waldegrave, hon. capt.
Walpole, hon. gen.
Western, C. C.
Wilkins, Walter

TELLERS.

Smyth, J. H.
Wynn, C. W.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, April 4.

PETITIONS RESPECTING THE PEACE ESTABLISHMENT—AND PUBLIC EXPENDITURE.] Sir *J. Owen* presented a petition from the freeholders of the county of Pembroke, complaining of the great agricultural distress which was felt, praying for retrenchment, and depreciating the maintenance of a large standing army in time of peace. The hon. baronet said, that with respect to the subject of economy, whatever difference of opinion there might be as to the mode in which it should be effected, there was but one opinion throughout the country as to the necessity of it. He hoped his majesty's ministers would proceed in that course which they had begun, and he, for one, should be prepared to support them.

Mr. *Ponsonby* said, he was glad to perceive that petitions were arriving from every part of the kingdom, recommending economy and retrenchment. It would be idle, however, to expect any real system of economy from ministers. That House must do its duty in compelling retrenchment, as it had already done its duty in rejecting the property tax. It should be remembered, however, that it was not by one sweeping proposition that any good could be done; they must be incessantly vigilant; they must scrutinize every item, and in the aggregate of comparatively small sums would be an amount of saving to the public which would afford a substantial relief.

Mr. *Jones* observed, that he could not wholly agree in what had fallen from the right hon. gentleman, because he believed that ministers were now willing to adopt a system of practical economy, and he confessed he should be more disposed to support a system of economy coming from them, than one coming from the other side of the House. He believed he could say the same for his hon. colleague. Economy the country required, and economy to the utmost extent, compatible with the safety and the dignity of the country, he trusted would be practised by his majesty's ministers.

Mr. *Calcraft* said, he was not surprised to hear the hon. member declare his willingness to support a system of economy originating with the ministers, rather than one proposed by the other side of the House, but he trusted his opinion would not influence the judgment of others. For his own part, he had no confidence whatever in the intentions of ministers, because they had done nothing voluntarily, but only when the votes of that House compelled them. The hon. member talked about such retrenchments as were compatible with the safety of the country. Perhaps the hon. member was one of those who thought the continuance of the office of a third secretary of state in time of peace, or the increased salaries of the secretaries to the admiralty, or the maintenance of such a large military force as had been shown in many respects to be unnecessary, essentially connected with the safety of the country. As to real, practical economy, nothing had yet been done, but every thing remained to be done. Ministers, indeed, when they found that some retrenchments must be made, sat about them with a very ill grace, and brought forward reduced estimates in the ordnance, and the army, though they had before declared that any further reductions were utterly impracticable. So much for their sincere disposition to redeem the pledge given by the prince regent in his speech at the commencement of the session. Parliament had had a proof of what might be expected from ministers spontaneously, in the proceedings upon the property tax; he did not know whether the hon. gentleman was one of those who voted against that tax, but was quite sure that if his doctrine of confiding in the system which ministers might propose, had been adopted, the country would now have been saddled with that odious and hateful impost.

Sir *J. Owen* disclaimed the imputation which had been cast upon him by the hon. member who spoke last. He did not say that he would support any system of economy which ministers might propose, though he should certainly be more ready to trust to the wisdom of their measures, than in those of the opposite side of the House. He begged leave to declare that he stood pledged to no support whatever; his wish was to see a real and practical economy introduced, and if it were introduced it should have his concurrence, wherever it might originate. With respect to the property tax, he could inform the hon. member that he was one of those who voted for its rejection as did also his hon. colleague, and he voted against it because he sincerely thought that it was a tax which ought not to be imposed upon the country in a time of peace.

Mr. *Jones* repeated his assertion, that he should be more willing to support a system of economy proposed by ministers than by the hon. gentlemen opposite. When those hon. gentlemen were in office, he did not think they exhibited any great predilection for economy or constitutional practices. He need only advert to the introduction of a noble lord into the cabinet, and the measure which was adopted with respect to another noble lord, to enable him to hold a sinecure office of considerable emolument in conjunction with that of prime minister. He denied that ministers had never thought of economy till it was forced upon them. This assertion was contradicted by the circumstance of their having, at the commencement of the session, been careful to place that recommendation of economy in the mouth of the prince regent, of which frequent mention had been made.

Mr. *Ponsonby* said, he did not see how the charge which the hon. gentleman had brought against the administration of 1806 was at all connected with the question of economy. The admission of lord Ellenborough into the cabinet certainly had nothing to do with it; and as to the bill which was brought in to enable lord Grenville to retain the office of auditor of the exchequer, that created no new salary; there was no augmentation of expense. The only object of that bill was to sanction a union of two offices which had before been considered as not capable of being held by the same individual; but had the bill never passed, the salary of auditor and the salary of the first lord of the treasury, would equally have subsisted. With regard to the great question of public economy, he hoped to see that carried, as the question of the income tax was carried. He was quite satisfied that no exertions in that House would have saved the country from that tax, if the country itself had not raised its voice. It was the firm, deliberate, constitutional petitions of the people, backing their representatives, which alone secured the rejection of the tax. The same quiet, constitutional, and energetic course now would obtain the same results; but if the people deserted their own cause, if, having obtained one triumph, they remained passive—if they did not use all their means of approaching that House and declaring their sentiments, they would find that no real substantial, and practical economy would be adopted by ministers; on the contrary, they would be amused and deluded with the "unreal mockery" of it, while, in fact, the same system of improvident expenditure would be maintained.

Mr. *Barham* observed, that he could speak from his own personal knowledge, as to the truth of the allegations which the petition contained. Nothing could equal the distress which was felt by all classes of persons employed in agriculture, in that part of Wales from which it came. With respect to what had fallen from an hon. member, about his willingness to support a ministerial system of economy, if his meaning had been misunderstood, he hoped he would take the opportunity of explaining himself, before the subject then under discussion was disposed of. He could assure him it would make a very strong impression upon his constituents, if they knew, as probably they would know, that he was not prepared to support any plan of real and practical economy, from whichever side of the House it might come.

Mr. *Jones* observed, that all he had said was, that he should be more disposed to support a system of economy, upon a large and adequate scale, if proposed by ministers, than one which might come from the other side of the House. With respect to his constituents, he thanked the hon. member for his advice, but he had little doubt of being able to satisfy their expectations.

Lord *G. Cavendish* expressed his sense of the compliment which had been paid to the gentlemen who sat on his side of the House.

Lord *Compton* commented on the inconsistency of gentlemen, who contended that the House had adopted no measures of economy, and immediately afterwards asserted economy to have been forced upon ministers. He had certainly great confidence in his majesty's government, but at the same time, they, like all other public officers, required to be carefully watched in the performance of their duty. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Jones) had not deserved the attacks which had been made on him. He had said he would support the plans of economy which might be brought forward by ministers, but had not pledged himself to oppose those recommended from other quarters.

Mr. *Protheroe* said, in the part he had acted with respect to the property-tax, he had made a great sacrifice of popularity to a sense of duty. He had voted in favour of the continuance of that impost, in the conviction that ministers would feel more strongly the importance of attending to economy while disposing of money so hardly raised, than it was to be expected they would while they went on borrowing, and thus obtained the necessary sums by means not so immediately felt by the country, though more fatal in their consequences.

Mr. *Shaw Lefevre* thought the tax on farming horses was severely felt. He had heard of a case in which the farmer had been charged for a riding horse, because he had been seen on one which he used in his business, and a common labourer attending him had been set down as his groom.

Lord *Nugent* said:—Sir; I rise for the purpose of presenting a petition from the people of the town of Aylesbury. It represents, 1st, the exorbitant extent of our military establishments; 2dly, the increased and increasing profusion of the civil list expenditure; 3dly, the useless increase of various public salaries and pensions; and, 4thly, the unnatural and mischievous operation of an artificial paper capital and currency, as the real grounds of the present heavy distresses which are pressing on the people of England. It petitions also, on other and higher grounds, against the military establishments, as entirely subversive of the principles and spirit of our free constitution. And here, Sir, permit me to observe, that my constituents are not petitioning against a measure, on which this House has already decided. Early in the session, I had the honour of presenting a petition somewhat similar to this from them. Since that period, a great and signal event has occurred, which, in a financial view at least, has materially altered the character of even those parts of the military establishment of this country in which this House, so unfortunately as I think, has already agreed with the committee of supply. I mean the decisive and final rejection of that impost on income, miscalled the property-tax. A triumph in my opinion certainly far more glorious than any of those, which, won by our arms, have been the theme of our pride and our thanksgiving. Because a victory not purchased by blood, or by tears,—because a victory of public spirit struggling in behalf of the interests of an already overburthened, and nearly exhausted, nation,—because a victory which has redeemed the country from that principle of direct taxation in peace, which has never yet been found compatible with public liberty,—and, lastly, and above all, because a victory which has redeemed, triumphantly redeemed, this House, in the eyes of a grateful people, from the imputation of having interests separable from those of the public, which has shown the people of England that their best refuge in their distress, the best bulwark for their interests, is in petition to a virtuous, a spirited, and a patriotic House of Commons. Sir, this manifestation of public feeling, on the means of collecting the revenue, on the extent of the revenue itself to be collected, throws us back at once on the question of a reduced establishment. Eight millions have been struck off in income tax, and malt duty, —it now remains to be seen, not how this sum is to be raised, but how it is to be saved to the country. On the general stagnation of all enterprise, both in agriculture and in commerce,—on the utter ruin of attempting to raise this sum, even by loan, on which an interest is to be paid, —I shall leave my constituents to speak for themselves in their petition. But there is one part of this petition, of an entirely distinct character, to which I must beg to call the attention of the House. A prayer, expressed in a tone, and conceived in a spirit, which I cordially and anxiously hope may meet with a general expression all through the country. They represent very strongly, the totally new and unconstitutional destination of a very considerable portion of this peace army. I mean of the 30,000 men, forming what is called our army of occupation in France. And here, Sir, I cannot but express how warmly I wish that the House may concur with them in their view of the character of this force. By this destination of that army, ministers have deprived parliament of the only two means constitutional security which, as it appears to me, parliament can ever enjoy, as against a military force—I mean the operation of the mutiny act, and of the annual vote of supply. The latter certainly cannot affect an army supported actually by the government of France, or rather by a contribution which some gentlemen would have us believe, becomes a droit the private property of the Crown. The mutiny act, the constitutional code by which the British army is governed, must, I conceive, have a rather questionable operation in a country at peace with us, and governed by an independent code of its own, a code which must equally, and without reference to the laws of any other land, affect every alien living within its influence. Besides these two, I know of no third security which parliament can set up against an army. Both these are removed. If this principle be tolerable to any extent, it is tolerable to every extent. If it be good for 30,000 it is good for 100,000 men. Take then 100,000 Englishmen, place them in the pay of a French king, and under the orders of an English one, take them from under the control of British laws, with British arms in their hands, and place them on the shores of the British Channel, within four-and-twenty hours of our own coast, and then would any minister dare to get up in his place and say that this is any longer a force within the purview or pale of the constitution? Would he say that this was any longer a parliamentary government, or would he say that ours was any longer a free state? Sir, the petitioners remark very strongly on the duties assigned to that army, and the lessons in which that army is, for five years, to be instructed, and made a party in France. They observe (I use their own words), that "as they are sent thither to keep down the expression of public opinion in France, so they may be brought, on their return, to keep down what remains of public spirit in England." Sir, this is a bad lesson to teach an English army. To teach them, among the crimes, not loud, but deep, of an abject and suffering land, how a press may be, not regulated, but enslaved,—how a government may be, not accepted, but imposed,—how a people may be, not reconciled, but subdued. Let us recollect that it was on the shores of America, that the French army first imbibed notions of republicanism. That it was from thence that they communicated to the people a lesson, which, if the French nation had been worthy of rational freedom, might, instead of leading to blood, to confusion, to the worst and most odious of all tyranny, have shown the way to a free and happy constitution. Let us beware lest, as the French army brought from America notions which dethroned a king, our army may import from France notions which may disfranchise the people.

Lord *George Cavendish* believed the sentiments expressed in this petition were not confined to the town of Aylesbury, but were common to the country at large. He now gave notice that it was his intention, shortly after the recess, to submit a motion to the House upon the public expenditure, and the existence of a large standing army in time of peace, which was in direct opposition to the principles of the constitution of this country, and subversive of our liberties.

The petitions were ordered to lie on the table.

UNCONSTITUTIONAL INTERFERENCE OF THE MILITARY.] Lord *Milton* concurred in the observation of the noble lord who had just sat down, that the existence of a standing army in time of peace, endangered the liberties of the country. The truth of this observation was rendered apparent by a circumstance which had come to his knowledge that day. It might perhaps be considered ridiculous to introduce any thing which had occurred to himself as a private individual, yet, as others were liable to the same inconvenience, he thought he was at liberty to call the attention of the House to the subject. He was going that day about the streets, in an open carriage, in company with a noble lord, a friend of his, when on coming to the corner of a street, in the neighbourhood of St. James's, his carriage was stopped by one of the horse guards, and he was prevented from proceeding. Both himself and his noble friend remonstrated with the man on his conduct, and desired to know his name, and the authority upon which he took so extraordinary a course, as that of stopping his majesty's liege subjects upon the King's highway in the pursuit of their legal and proper business? The man, however, refused to give this information, would not suffer them to proceed, and struck the horses, to prevent their progress, adding to his noble friend, "I will strike you too, if you attempt to go on." This was done with a naked sword, and in a street by no means confined—for it was in Pall-Mall, in which, at the time, there were not above ten carriages at most. It might be said, that these men were placed there for the preservation of the peace; but this certainly was a most extraordinary mode of effecting that object, namely, by threatening to cut down his majesty's subjects while going upon their peaceable errands [Hear, hear!]. He would not say that by the existence of such practices our liberties were extinct; but he would say, that the introduction of such means of preserving the peace of the metropolis was well worth the attention of the House. He could view the practice in no other light than a desire to accustom the people to see soldiers used in situations where, under the principles of the constitution, peace officers had hitherto been deemed sufficient. He did not wish to see guards called into action, where we could avail ourselves of the assistance of the civil power. He was the last who wished to see riot or disturbance; but he was certain that on ordinary occasions the constables were quite sufficient for their prevention [Hear, hear!].

Lord *Castlereagh* could not speak of his own knowledge to the particular transaction to which allusion had been made by the noble lord. He knew, however, and he had no doubt the noble lord was equally well-informed, that it was by no means a novel practice on court days, to have the horse guards to clear the avenues to the court. Upon those occasions, without meaning to defend the conduct of a particular individual, he could only bear his testimony to the temper and propriety with which the men performed the duty intrusted to them [Cries of No!]. He had never heard any other character of our soldiers. What particular arrangement had been made for the day he knew not; but he was sure it could only have been intended to preserve the peace, and was not designed to introduce any novel or unnecessary use of the military.

Lord *Milton* was certainly desirous of believing, that the employment of the military was simply with a view of preserving order, but his objections were to the use of the military at all, where the civil power was sufficient to preserve the peace. If such a use was once tolerated, it would frequently creep on, till the civil power was totally superseded by the military.

Lord *Nugent* said, that nobody who had witnessed the conduct of the life guards, when called out, would deny that they had conducted themselves with great temper. He apprehended, however, that the object of his noble friend was not so much to call the attention of the House to the conduct of the particular soldier, by whom he had been attacked, as to know from whom he had received his orders.—He thought it behoved that House to inquire, by what authority the military received the power of stopping his majesty's subjects on the highway, in the exercise of their peculiar avocations.

Lord *Castlereagh* said, it was by no means unusual, on great spectacles, or on reviews, to employ the military to prevent confusion and disorder. It had been the practice at all times in this country on court days, and had never been objected to, because every gentleman must feel, it was a practice solely originating in a desire to preserve the peace.

Mr. *Tierney* considered that his noble friend had done very right in bringing this subject before the House. The most glaring innovations were now introduced in the employment of military aid, in such a manner as was sanctioned neither by law nor practice. Guards were now stationed, not as formerly, merely at St. James's, but through the whole of Pall Mall, and he could assign no reason for it, but the design ministers had of accustoming the people to military spectacles. He thought the military had no right to be employed, excepting when the civil power was likely to be thwarted—then, and only then, they might be called. He hoped the noble lord (Castlereagh) would pay some attention to this, and endeavour to remove this dangerous inconvenience. With respect to the attack made on his noble friend, the public might thank God there had been no murder committed; for had his noble friend been choleric, the most serious consequences might have ensued. But he deprecated these frequent military parades, not merely on the ground of inconvenience. He decidedly thought they were done by ministers, for the purpose of making some apology to the House for the increase of the household troops [Loud cheers from the opposition]. He would repeat it; it was a part of the system ministers had adopted for persuading the House to sanction this increase in the household troops [Repeated cheers]. The case was very different in the city, when public festivals took place. He would allude, in a particular manner, to the Mansion-house on Easter Monday, and he would ask, how did the Lord Mayor act on these occasions? Why, although there was of course a very great number of persons present there, and a vast crowd always assembled to see them going in, yet his lordship had always, in a constitutional manner, which did honour to himself and the city, discharged a single soldier from appearing. On the same principle he thought ministers should act, and he therefore decidedly condemned their conduct as a violent breach of the constitution [Hear!].

Lord *Castlereagh* protested against the doctrine, that the employment of the military on court days was a novel system. It had always been practised; and as the military had been called out when the court was held at Carlton-house, he supposed it had been thought by those who had the direction of the business, that the same regulation applied to the court when at Buckingham-house.

Mr. *Wynn* said, that the present system was totally new. It was most necessary for the House to resist in the beginning this assumption of a right in the Crown to stop persons on the highway, in the peaceable pursuit of their lawful occupations. He himself had that day seen soldiers waving their swords, galloping this way and that, stopping or endangering passengers, without any shadow of constitutional authority for such alarming conduct. The only legal way in which the soldier could act was, in assistance of the constable. When the constable was resisted, and found inefficient for the repressing of tumult, then, and then only, could the soldier be called in: but it was quite necessary that the public should know that no soldier whatever had any right, on any pretence, thus to stop unoffending passengers on the public highway.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that the custom of stationing guards in the streets on court days had long been practised—ever since the days of queen Anne. The question merely was, whether this was necessary for the observance of public decorum? As to its not being necessary to station guards in St. James's, because the court was held at Buckingham-house, it must be remembered that the usual road to Buckingham-house was down St. James's-street. The occasions on which the court met were now so rare, that a greater crowd than usual was to be apprehended on that account; and the same principle which would justify the calling in of soldiers on any occasion, would justify their appearance on the present. Certainly the civil power was to be applied to first, and then the military, if necessary; but that had always been found convenient on these occasions, for the sake of promoting order and preserving tranquillity.

Lord *Folkestone* was astonished to hear that this military parade was an established usage in the country. It was not so; and he distinctly remembered when the military were not employed, except on the two birth days. He remembered when court days were very frequent, yet his majesty had never employed military, but only a few constables. Now, however, the case was very different, for the military were armed with the full power. He had hoped, from what had passed in the beginning of the session, that some arrangement on this head would have been made. He was so disgusted with the attachment of ministers to this military parade, that he always endeavoured on court days to abstain from going where the military was substituted for the civil power. Yet this day he had seen soldiers stationed at Hyde-park-corner, where no doubt, ministers would say there was great necessity for them! [A laugh]. An argument was brought in favour of this military parade from its convenience, but he protested that this was no palliation. Military spectacles, and military guards, might do very well in military governments, where the energies of a people were paralyzed by despotism, but they were hostile to the genius of the British constitution [Cheers]. In a free government there must be inconveniencies, but these must be submitted to, and not be removed by the unwarrantable stretch of power. He was glad his noble friend had brought this matter before the House; he thought the country were much obliged to him for so doing, and he implored the House to do their duty on this occasion.

Mr. *C. Calvert* said, that he and his brother lived in St. James's place, and their coach-houses were in St. James's street; but such had been the inconvenience to which they had been subject on occasions like that which had been now alluded to, that their carriages were frequently prevented from coming to their doors, without application to the commanding officer of the guards on duty; and on some occasions their families were prevented altogether from reaching their houses, otherwise than by quitting their carriages and going on foot. He thought this demanded some remedy.

Mr. *Ponsonby* observed that, as the word inconvenience, was pretty often adopted by the noble lord (Castlereagh) and the right hon. the chancellor of the exchequer, he would shortly allude to it. He was astonished—he was indignant to hear such an unconstitutional expression used by any member of the House, as the right hon. gentleman had made use of. He had said "he thought the interference of the military was not to be extended beyond convenience." But who was to judge of that convenience? Who was to determine how far it should go and no further? Was it the right hon. gentleman or his colleagues? Was it to be judged of by any man in that

House? Convenience was an admirable argument, which the right hon. gentleman and his noble friend and colleague seemed to have got. But suppose a highwayman should meet the right hon. gentleman, and take his purse from him, what a fine apology would it make for the highwayman at the Old Bailey, were he to say, "O, I took the purse because it was very convenient for me to have it, and there was not a shilling in it which I could conveniently do without." This was precisely the case with the right hon. gentleman—his apology with the military was exactly the same with the apology of the highwayman for taking the purse. But since the secretary for the home department was now to have his attention undivided—since by the decision of last night he was exclusively to be confined to domestic concerns, would not this abuse of military power be a very proper subject for his notice? He denied that any power of the nature they had lately usurped, was justifiable in the military. If the government required aid to keep the peace, let them call for peace officers, but not for the military. Let them remember this was Britain, that this was a free country, and not a nation of slaves. He trusted the right hon. gentleman would reflect on what he had said. He hoped he would put away the argument of convenience, and annihilate that word out of his vocabulary. Let him remember that convenience might suit very well the caprice of a tyrant, but was incompatible with the rights of free born Britons. Our constitution, not our convenience, was the standard of duty.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* restated his view, of the subject, and admitted that the necessity of the case was the limit which ought to regulate the interposition of the military. When rightly understood, he was sure there was no difference on the point between him and the gentlemen opposite.

Mr. *Brougham* expressed his satisfaction at what had fallen from the noble lord opposite, on the novelty of this transaction, and begged to call the attention of the House to that which had been lost sight of in the discussion, namely, that what was called the necessity of the case, had of late become more extensive, from the increase of the occasions which called it forth. Formerly parades of this kind took place only twice a year, on the king's and queen's birth-days. At the commencement of the present reign, and indeed thirty or forty years ago, peace-officers alone were seen keeping order among the crowd; but now not a court-day passed, without the employment of a strong military force being stationed on the public highway. This had grown prodigiously of late years. He remembered, that about twelve years ago half-a-dozen guards at the top of St. James's-street were thought a sufficient number to keep the way open. The times were, however, altered, and this day he could hardly observe a yard's length of St. James's-street without a soldier; indeed the street presented something like a military spectacle. In inadvertently giving it this name, he had hit on the right point; for this military appearance had of late grown into great repute, and though it might arise from childish vanity in a certain quarter, it was yet of great importance to the public, that when, as on that day, hardly six coaches were to be seen, their progress should not be intercepted by an armed force, where there was no more real occasion for it than there was at the opera, the theatre, or the mansion-house. If, however, it became a general practice in one quarter, it soon would in others, and the evil would then become general.

Lord *Castlereagh* disclaimed having stated that the practice was of so novel a character, and he protested against the imputation which gentlemen opposite had endeavoured to cast upon the government, of having a wish to introduce a novel principle in the internal affairs of the country. They had no such intention. The introduction of soldiers, he repeated, became necessary, for the convenience which was essential on days of this kind. The value of this precaution was well known to gentlemen opposite; but it was a part of their system to build on a trifle a great constitutional point, and to create thereby a false impression in the mind of the country. The people would, he trusted, see through this flimsy attempt, and feel that the powers of the constitution were too strong to be shaken by any occurrence of this nature—too strong, indeed, for any ministers who might attempt any measure inconsistent with its principles.

Mr. *W. Smith* said, that the great objection to this sort of parade was, that, in the first place, it put soldiers in the place of peace officers, and exposed the public to the indiscreet control of military power; and, in the second, it subjected the soldier to a very awkward predicament. For, suppose when a dragoon is stationed in St. James's-street or Pall-Mall, with orders to allow no carriage to pass except in a particular direction, that he should meet with a refractory individual, either in the person of a coachman or his master, the officer might not be on the spot time enough to interfere, and the soldier would expose himself perhaps to a breach of military discipline if he allowed the party to pass, or to the arm of civil law if he attempted to prevent him. The recurrence of such accidents ought to be prevented.

Mr. *Bennet* wished to set the noble lord right as to the point of practice connected with this matter. In early life he held a commission in the guards, and, from his own experience, could affirm that, except on birth-days, no such parade was seen—it never was exhibited on drawing-room occasions. When the King came down to parliament, or went to the theatre, a few soldiers formed his escort, but nothing more. Until lately, none appeared at Carlton-house, where now a column of troops was stationed on every levee-day. He denied that there was any disposition at that side of the House to magnify an occurrence of this nature; in fact it could not be exaggerated; the bare statement of the matter was quite sufficient to show its importance. The moderation of his noble friend (lord Milton) prevented matters from being carried to an extremity. It could not be tolerated that two English gentlemen should be threatened by a soldier's sword for merely passing on the king's highway.

Lord *Castlereagh* denied that this sort of military parade was observable on every levee-day, and stated, that a greater colouring had been given to the present circumstance than the statement of the noble lord, who was the subject of it, warranted.

Mr. *Bennet* said, he had seen the military force to which he alluded on late levee-days, at Carlton-house.

Lord *Milton* attached no blame to the soldier, but to the system under which he acted.

Lord *Nugent* asked the noble lord opposite, whether it was not important for the people of England to know at what period, and under what circumstances, they were to be stopped on the king's highway? It was necessary both for the soldier and the public that this question should be settled. For this purpose, he begged leave to move, "That there be laid before this House, a copy of the instructions issued to such of the life-guards as were on duty this day, in the city of Westminster."

Lord *Milton* seconded the motion.

Lord *Castlereagh* opposed the motion, on the ground that enough had been done to cause an inquiry to be made into the circumstances of the case, and to prevent a recurrence of the inconvenience that had been the subject of complaint.

Mr. *Wynn* said, that this was not the first notice the ministers had had of this sort of proceeding. He had himself, early in the session, adverted to it, and a noble friend of his (lord Folkestone) had also drawn the attention of the House to it. Both were, however, disregarded; it was time, then, to call for investigation. This matter was, it seems, to be limited by the rules of necessity and convenience; but who were to be the judges of this?—the soldiers. And, he would ask, had not every other person, whose avocations called them out, the same right to have their convenience attended to [Hear, hear!]? The noble lord said, that too high a colouring had been given to this subject; but he would ask him, if his noble friend (lord Milton) would not have been legally justified in putting to death any man who, sword in hand, interrupted his passage in the public streets? Let the House look at the dangers arising out of an occurrence of this kind. If the soldier enforces his orders and spills blood, in such an event the civil law will redeem his responsibility with his life; and if he disobeys his instructions, the military law will exact from him the same responsibility. This, then, was surely an important consideration, and one which had in vain been incidentally brought before ministers. Besides, there was another view of the subject, and one for which their journals would furnish many precedents—he alluded to the breach of privilege on a member of the House that it involved. For it certainly was an assault upon a member, whether he was coming down to the House or not.

Mr. *Bathurst* said, it was quite unnecessary to give such solemn importance to a subject of this kind. On the points of privilege, which, it was said, their journals recorded, he trusted, it could not be the intention of the hon. gentleman opposite to revive those as they formerly existed. The hon. gentleman had fairly stated, that the party offending was amenable to the law; and he, at the same time, rather inconsistently asked, who were to be the judges on occasions of this kind? Why, he would answer, the law [Cries of Hear, hear!]—which would take cognizance of the fact. This ceremony of preserving order and decorum, was usual on the birth-days, but the House knew that since the lamented illness of the King, which prevented their regular celebration, drawing-rooms, in point of form, supplied their place, so far as to require the same military regulations. If those regulations had been in any particular case exceeded, enough had been said to originate that sort of inquiry which would doubtless remove the obstruction. He hoped, therefore, the noble lord would feel that there was no necessity for pressing his motion.

The House divided:—

For the Motion	31
Against it	48
Majority	17

CLERK OF THE PLEAS IN IRELAND.] Mr. *Abercrombie* wished to renew a question which he had some time ago put to a right hon. gentleman opposite, as to the office in Ireland held by the late earl of Buckinghamshire. He wished to know whether the commissioners appointed for the purpose had commenced their inquiries, and whether any practical steps had yet been taken with respect to the office in question.

Mr. *Peel* said, that some time had elapsed since the commissioners had been employed in examining into the nature of the different offices connected with the courts of law in Ireland; and that he understood their report had been transmitted by a person who was now on his way to this country. It would be laid before the House as soon as it was received.

Mr. *Leslie Foster* said, that the commissioners had found it necessary to take an extended view of the footing on which the offices connected with the courts of justice in Ireland stood. It would not surprise the House that this inquiry had occupied much time, when it was recollected that commissioners had been no less than seven years engaged in the investigation of the fees taken in the English court of chancery. The commissioners had found that the inquiries connected with the court of chancery in Ireland had occupied much of their time, and they were engaged in this branch of their duty when they received a notice from his right hon. friend (Mr. Peel) that it was wished that they should immediately proceed to make those inquiries connected with the court of Common Pleas. As soon as this notice was received, they immediately proceeded to comply with its directions. The subject was so complicated, that it had occupied their time entirely, till within a few days. Serious doubts had been entertained by some of the commissioners as to the propriety of transmitting the report on one branch of the inquiries before the whole were finished; this however had been over-ruled, and the report on the office referred to by the hon. and learned gentleman was now on its way to this country.

Mr. *Abercrombie* said, that his question referred to two points, one of which had been only answered; the other was, whether any practical measure had been taken towards the reduction of the office itself, or any proceeding instituted for this purpose?

Mr. *Peel* said, it was impossible to do so until the inquiry was concluded. He begged at the same time to state, that he by no means acquiesced in the claim of the chief baron of the exchequer; he saw no reason whatever to sanction his right, and he felt persuaded that the hon. and learned gentleman opposite, when he heard the result, would have no reason to complain.

Mr. *Ponsonby* hoped the inquiry of the commissioners extended to the office of deputy as well as principal.

Mr. *Leslie Foster* said, that the commissioners extracted much of their information from the cross-examination of the officers themselves. When the right hon. gentleman saw the cross-examination of the deputy, which was continued for twenty days, he would see that nothing had been left undone. There was a society of attornies in Dublin, called law clerks, who voluntarily came forward, and gave much important information; they indeed co-operated on the best understanding with the commissioners.

Mr. *Ponsonby* said, he was glad to find they had done so.

STATE OF IRELAND.] Sir *John Newport* observed, that having given notice of his intention this day to submit to the House a motion respecting the State of Ireland, he had flattered himself that however unworthy and incapable of the task he might be, yet that the magnitude of the subject would have insured a full attendance in the House [Hear, hear!]. He felt too strongly the importance of the question, involving, as it did, the tranquillity and welfare of so large a part of the British empire, to venture to agitate it in a House so thin as that which he was addressing. With every respect, therefore, for those who had done him the honour to attend on the occasion, he felt that he should not discharge his duty to the country, if he did not postpone his motion until the 24th, when he did hope that hon. gentlemen, whatever might be their opinion of the incompetence of the person who was to address them, would at least think proper to be present at the discussion of a subject of such paramount importance [Hear, hear!].

Sir *N. Coulthurst* approved of the right hon. baronet's determination, and expressed his hope that there would be a fuller attendance when the subject was brought forward.

Sir *Egerton Brydges* agreed in the opinion, that a full attendance was necessary, but he wished the question should stand for a more distant period than the 24th, as at that time some gentlemen might be withdrawn by the county sessions.

Sir *John Newport* regretted, that he could not comply with this suggestion; for if he made any alteration in the period of this postponement, he might be deprived of the valuable assistance of some hon. friends of his who meant to take a part in the discussion.

Mr. *Peel* participated in the surprise and regret of the right hon. baronet, on the insufficient attendance which this question seemed to have procured. He lamented, that whatever views gentlemen might take of this subject, they had not thought it necessary to mark by their attendance their opinion of the paramount importance of the discussion. Whatever might be the issue of the debate, no doubt much good would flow from the exercise of the collective wisdom of the House, and from the diffusion of that information which members who were acquainted of local circumstances could bring, and which would be well calculated to prepare the House for the general discussion on the state of that country.

Mr. *Plunkett* concurred in the opinion of the right hon. gentleman who had last spoken, as to the paramount importance of this subject. He with him lamented the thin state of the House, but he would be sorry to conceive that this absence was caused by any indisposition on the part of the English members, to attend to the affairs of Ireland. If such an impression went abroad, he was sure it would be most unfounded; for, from his own experience, he was free to confess, that the affairs of Ireland had always obtained in that House a fair and undivided discussion. He was unable to say what had caused the present thin attendance, but he sincerely hoped it would not be found to recur on the 24th instant, when his right hon. friend, to whom Ireland stood so much indebted for his generous services, would renew the topic—a topic connected with the well-being of his country, and also with the best interests of the whole empire. One great advantage had arisen from discussion on this subject—the state of his unhappy country (for unhappy he must call it!) had of late elicited attention; and he conjured his majesty's ministers to turn their attention towards it. It was a subject that ought to recur to them daily—nay, hourly. They were alone competent to make the measure fully and immediately effective, and every moment they delayed this inquiry, was fatal not only to the dearest interests of Ireland, but to the general benefit of the empire. He well knew that no single measure could repair the evil, or cure the radical vices of the system under which Ireland had been so long governed; but he also knew that government was the only party from whom a prompt and efficacious remedy could, with any certainty of success, be promptly applied.

Lord *Castlereagh* concurred in the propriety of postponing this discussion, and he assured the right hon. and learned gentleman who had last spoken, that the present government were not indifferent to the necessity of considering this most important of all subjects which could come under its observation; and he sincerely hoped, that when the debate took place, it would not only be marked by a full attendance, but by their full and undivided attention; persuaded as he was, that a calm and steady temper was essential for the consideration of a question of the utmost complication, and of the greatest importance. It was impossible to expect that the consideration of a subject so extensive could be closed in one year; but it behoved the House to watch over the rising greatness of Ireland, and to discover the best remedy for those evils by which it had so long been repressed. Free as the investigation would, as he trusted, be, from the spirit of party, and unbiassed by any considerations but the public good, he confessed that he should look to the result with the greatest confidence and expectation.

Mr. *Prittie* agreed entirely with what had been said by those hon. members who had preceded him. He only hoped the right hon. baronet would move for a call of the House for the day to which he had postponed his motion. He assured the House, that it had been with the greatest struggle with his own feelings that he had abstained, from the commencement of the present session, to bring under the consideration of the House the misconduct of a certain magistrate in Ireland, thinking that the most proper opportunity would be when the state of Ireland should come under consideration. It was a case of the greatest injustice and oppression to the individuals concerned, and which he had intended to bring forward under the form of a revision of the magistracy. He wished to ask a question of the right hon. secretary for Ireland, namely, whether the lord lieutenant of Ireland had given any answer to the memorial of the Messrs. Egan, of Roscrea, a copy of which he had in his pocket, and meant to have produced, had the expected debate gone on.

Mr. *Peel* replied, that an answer had been given to the memorial, the particulars of which he would refrain from adverting to, as they could only lead to a premature discussion. The matter stood over for the decision of a judicial tribunal, the result of which it would be improper to anticipate.

Mr. *Ponsonby* observed, that on the last occasion, when the affairs of Ireland were under consideration in that House, the noble lord opposite had obtained a calm and dispassionate hearing [Hear, hear, from lord Castlereagh]—unmixed with any considerations of party politics. He was glad the noble lord seemed to feel that he had been so received on that occasion, and he could, he thought, promise him a similar reception on a future occasion. The right hon. secretary opposite had expressed his satisfaction at this postponement, inasmuch as it was calculated to bring forward the sentiments of those who were locally connected with the state of Ireland. Now he meant no disrespect to his countrymen, when he stated, that with the most earnest wish for a full attendance of Irish members, he was yet more anxious for a full attendance of English ones; because on their cooler and more impartial judgment, on a subject of this kind, he was inclined to place the most implicit reliance. It might appear invidious for him to state the reasons of this opinion; but if the House would look back to the history of Ireland, and the nature and transactions of its government and, above all, to the manner in which political power was distributed there, they would at once see the narrow bounds that separated conflicting interests; and their own reflexions would show sufficient grounds to prefer, in a discussion of this kind, the opinion and co-operation of men who had happily seen the principles of the British constitution in more active execution than they ever had been in Ireland, and who were, therefore, better entitled to consider the value of its blessings. For this reason he most fervently hoped that the motion of his right hon. friend would receive the full attention of the general members of the empire.

Mr. *Plunkett* begged to state, that in speaking of the radical vices of the Irish government, he did not mean to cast any imputation on any particular administration—his intention merely was to show, that the system on which that government acted, was radically erroneous, and that the source of the evil could not be reached without retracing the steps which had been trodden, and adopting a new and different policy towards that country.

Lord *Castlereagh* repeated his hope, that a question of such deep interest would be met with a temperate and dispassionate discussion.

Doctor *Duigenan* declared, that the former administration was the cause of the evils under which Ireland laboured. The present administration, on the contrary, was anxious to conciliate all parties, and to procure the general welfare of the country.

Mr. *Vesey Fitzgerald* said, that concurring as he did with the right hon. baronet in the propriety of postponing the motion, he felt no wish to prolong the present conversation, though he was far from thinking that it would be useless. The spirit which had been manifested on both sides of the House, and the importance which every person who had spoken had justly attached to this subject, would, he was convinced, secure a full attendance upon its discussion. He rose principally for the purpose of observing, that if the right hon. baronet did not think that the present conversation, and the regret which every member had expressed at the necessity of postponing the motion, would not have the effect of securing such an attendance as was due to the importance of the subject, it might be proper to enforce it by a call of the House. But after what had passed, gentlemen would feel themselves that day (he was almost going to say) ashamed of not attending in their places on the discussion of such a subject: he was convinced that the present thin attendance was not to be attributed to the indifference which gentlemen felt upon the question, but to the circumstance of the House being exhausted by so many long and arduous debates. With respect to the wish which had been expressed on the other side of the House, in which he entirely concurred, that there should be a full attendance of British as well as of Irish representatives upon this question, he wished to suggest to the right hon. baronet, that some inconvenience would result from the day he had named, as many English members would then be necessarily engaged attending the quarter sessions. The right hon. baronet would, however, have an opportunity of altering the day afterwards if he found it expedient. The explanation given by the right hon. and learned gentleman (Mr. Plunkett) namely, that when he spoke of "the radical vices of the Irish government," he was not ascribing them to the present administration, rendered it unnecessary for him to say a word upon the subject: if, indeed, the right hon. and learned gentleman had not risen before him, he meant to have recalled his attention to that expression, being sure that his explanation would be perfectly satisfactory.

Sir *J. Newport*, in consequence of the suggestion of the right hon. gentleman, proposed that the House should be called over on the 26th instant.

Mr. *Shaw Lefevre* wished that the 29th should be substituted.

Mr. *Hart Davis* observed, that there could be but one feeling on the necessity of giving an early and dispassionate consideration to the state of Ireland; and such, he was confident, was the general sentiment of every member of the House. He lamented, as much as any one, the thin attendance; but reminded, the right hon. baronet, that when his hon. friend, the member for Essex, first brought forward the agricultural question, there was not so full an attendance of members by half as there were now present.

Sir *J. Newport* said, that he must have been very much misunderstood if it was supposed he meant to impute any blame to gentlemen for not being present. He was aware that the House was wearied out by continued attendance, but he did not think it consistent with his public duty to bring forward a question so important in such a House.

The House was ordered to be called over on the 26th instant.

War Duties on Malt.] The House having resolved itself into a Committee of the whole House, "to consider of so much of the Acts for granting certain duties of excise during the war, as relates to malt," the Chancellor of the Exchequer moved, "That there be allowed for all dry unground malt which shall be produced to the officer of excise by any maltster or maker of malt for sale, seller or retailer of malt, common brewer, distiller, victualler, or vinegar maker, between the 1st day of July 1816, and the 7th day of July 1816, and for which the duties payable by law have been charged or paid, for every bushel made in England from barley, or other corn or grain, the sum of two shillings, and on every bushel made in Scotland from barley, or any other corn or grain, except beer or bigg, the sum of two shillings, and on every bushel made in Scotland from beer or bigg only, the sum of one shilling and four pence."

Mr. *Curwen* recommended that the duty should cease instantly, instead of being continued until the 5th of July. The 100,000*l.* of revenue which would be sacrificed by such a measure, was a trifle, compared with the benefits which the agriculture of the country would derive from it.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* replied, that the information which he had received, convinced him that a compliance with the recommendation of the hon. gentleman would involve a much greater sacrifice of revenue than the hon. gentleman imagined; and that instead of 100,000*l.* no less a sum than 7 or 800,000*l.* would be lost by it.

Sir *J. Newport* feared, that from the difference in the system of the excise between the two countries, it would be impossible to extend to the brewers of Ireland the same advantages as were intended for those of England. He lamented that the chancellor of the exchequer for Ireland was not then in his place, to give some information respecting that point.

Mr. *Curwen* wished it to be distinctly stated to the public what advantage they might expect to derive from the present sacrifice of the revenue. Whatever was the price of barley or malt, the public did not seem to gain from its reduction.

Mr. *W. Smith* replied, that it was impossible for his majesty's ministers, or for any tradesmen, to state exactly the amount of the reduction that would take place on beer, in consequence of the remission of the malt duties. He, however, understood from some of the London brewers, that they intended to reduce immediately the price of their beer. There were two things that entered into the consideration of the beer—quality and price. The quality had been considerably improved of late; and that was much better for the public, than if the price had been reduced, without any improvement in the article.

Sir *M. W. Ridley* contended, that it was useless to repeal a duty, to the great injury of the revenue, unless the consumer was to reap the advantage of it. The public had a right to expect that porter would be reduced in price a penny a pot.

Mr. *Brand* understood that it was the intention of the porter brewers to lower the price of porter as soon as the duty should be entirely taken off. If an immediate reduction were to take place, it would be necessary to allow them a drawback on the immense stock of malt which they had in hand.

Mr. *Curwen* thought no brewer ought to be allowed to sell beer or ale under a certain degree of strength; and therefore, in case any alteration was made, it ought always to be in the price and not in the quality. He believed the profits lately made in the trade were greater than they ought conscientiously to have been.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that no drawback was intended to be allowed on stock in hand, but it would be allowed on beer brewed between this and the 5th of July.

Mr. *W. Smith* said, that according to the best informed porter brewers, the proposed diminution in the malt duty would not make to them a halfpenny a pot difference. The nearest fraction was four-fifths of a halfpenny. It would therefore be very injurious to them to have it go abroad that the difference amounted to a penny. He was not sure himself, that the first calculation was perfectly correct, but he was sure the calculation of his hon. friend was wrong. As to what had been said of the strength of ale and porter, he hoped his hon. friend would point out what means there were of ascertaining such strength, for he knew of none.

Mr. *Curwen* did not think there could be so much difficulty in ascertaining the quality and strength of porter and ale as his hon. friend seemed to imagine. He had calculated himself the duty to be taken off at three farthings, though he might be wrong. What was the price before the imposition of the war duty? That duty produced an enhancement in the price of one penny.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, in 1802 a duty was imposed on malt, &c. calculated to increase the price to the public one halfpenny per pot. In the subsequent year, after the commencement of the war, the duty which was now about to expire, and which was laid entirely on malt, was likewise calculated to enhance the price one halfpenny.

Mr. *V. Fitzgerald*, in allusion to what had fallen from sir John Newport respecting the remission of the malt duties in Ireland, stated, that he intended in a few days to introduce a measure for regulating that subject.

The Resolution was then agreed to. The Chancellor of the Exchequer next moved, "That there be allowed to every common brewer the additional duties of excise upon malt charged by an act of the 43d year of his present majesty, upon all malt used and consumed after the 8th day of April 1816, and before the 5th day of July 1816, in the making or brewing of beer, not exceeding the proportions following, for every four barrels of porter which shall be charged with duty as strong beer in England, the sum of sixteen shillings, for every three barrels of ale the sum of sixteen shillings, for every four barrels of porter brewed in Scotland from malt made from barley, or any other corn or grain, except beer or bigg, the sum of sixteen shillings, for every four barrels of porter brewed in Scotland from malt made from beer or bigg only the sum of ten shillings and eightpence, for every three barrels of ale brewed in Scotland from malt made from barley, or any other corn or grain, except beer or bigg, the sum of sixteen shillings, and for every three barrels of ale brewed in Scotland from malt made from beer or bigg only the sum of ten shillings and eightpence."—Agreed to.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Friday, April 5.

Russian Loan in Holland.] Lord *King* asked what further proceedings it was intended to adopt with regard to the treaty between this country, Russia, and the king of the Netherlands, in order to carry into effect the stipulation for saddling this country with the payment of the sum of 2,000,000*l.* on account of Russia? Amidst the profusion which not long since prevailed, this sum of 2,000,000*l.* seemed to have been considered a trifle; upon the same principle, he supposed, as it had been said that 2,000,000*l.* more or 2,000,000*l.* less was of no consequence with regard to the amount of the loan. The treaty itself was curiously worded, as it professed to make a grateful return to this country for our exertions in securing the king of the Netherlands upon his throne; and this grateful return consisted in burthening us with the payment of 2,000,000*l.* He did not know that this transaction had specifically received the approbation of parliament, but he supposed that there would be a bill for the purpose of carrying the stipulation upon this subject into effect; and in the mean time, he was desirous of moving for an account of the interest and sinking fund of the loan of 25,000,000*l.* of Dutch florins, which was to be paid by this country, according to the stipulations of the above-mentioned treaty.

The Earl of *Liverpool* said, he was not aware that such an account had not been already laid upon the table, but certainly he had no objection to its production. With respect to the transaction itself, the engagement had been communicated to parliament during the last session, and the policy of it distinctly explained; nor had any objection been made to it either then or during the present session. With respect to the particular mode of carrying the transaction into effect, he was not aware at present what course would be adopted; but certainly the money would be voted by parliament in some way or other.

Lord *King* observed, that the interest only became due on the 5th of January, in the present year, and therefore no account could have been presented last session. With respect to the proceeding to be adopted, he still wished for further explanation.

The Earl of *Liverpool* admitted what had been stated, with regard to the interest, but could not at present say what particular course would be adopted.

The motion was agreed to.

Unconstitutional Interference of the Military.] The Earl of *Essex* rose to call the attention of the House to a subject which he conceived to be of great importance, both to their lordships and the public—he meant the obstructing of the streets by the military on drawing-room days. As he was yesterday proceeding along Pall-mall in an open carriage, with a noble friend of his (lord Milton) they were stopped by one of the life-guards stationed there, and informed that they must not pass that way. Upon his remonstrating, and asking the man by what authority he took upon him to stop persons on the king's highway, the soldier refused to answer, and struck the horse; and then, upon his asking the man's name, he refused to tell, and said, that unless he turned back, he would not only cut down the horse, but cut him down too. He looked about at the time for a peace officer, but could see no person of that description. He inquired for the officer of the guard, but was told he was at the palace, and the soldier repeatedly refused to give his name, but at length did so. There was no sort of confusion or even crowd in the streets, nor any thing which could possibly justify the stationing of soldiers in those places, especially without the superintendence of the civil power. In fact, there was no appearance of any thing indicating that sort of crowd from which a breach of the peace could be apprehended. Some gentlemen, who happened to be near at the time, gave their names, and offered to testify as to the insolent and improper proceeding of the soldier; but he did not deem it advisable to take any legal steps, conceiving that it might best contribute to the public interest if he stated the matter to their lordships. From the language and action of the soldier who had struck the horse with his sword, and threatened to cut him down, he considered it as an assault upon him on the king's highway. Having stated the circumstances to their lordships, he left them to deal with it as they thought proper. It was not a thing that concerned him merely, nor a thing which concerned merely any person of rank in that House and in the country; but it was the concern of every man in the country who might have occasion to pass along the streets of London. He remembered when, except on very particular occasions indeed, no soldiers were ever employed on this duty; and he hoped they would again see the propriety of returning to the practice of the good old times, as he might call them, when the military power was never employed to keep the peace till the civil power was found insufficient.

The Earl of *Liverpool* felt it incumbent upon him, particularly after the candid manner in which the noble earl had made his statement, to offer an observation upon the subject. The fact was, that so far as his recollection went, when there were levees and drawing rooms every week, as used to be the case, but little crowd was attracted, and there was no necessity for any particular precautions, but, owing to circumstances of late, drawing rooms and levees having become rare, a very considerable crowd was attracted when they did occur, and it became therefore necessary, for the sake of the public convenience, to have a military force to keep the passages to the court clear. He however by no means meant to state that a military force ought to be allowed to act, except in aid of the civil power, and there being no peace officer present, as the noble earl stated, was undoubtedly an oversight; care ought to be taken to rectify this in future. With regard, however, to the employment of the military upon such occasions, ever since he had any recollection upon the subject, they had always been stationed in the manner described, merely with this difference, that from the frequency of drawing rooms and levees, it only became necessary to resort to these precautions on the birth days, whilst now, from the rarity of drawing rooms and levees, the same precautions were necessary to be adopted at each of them. As to there being no crowd or tumult at the place mentioned by the noble earl, the real question was, what crowd or tumult there would have been, if the military had not been so employed. He always considered that if they were not so stationed, a confusion must ensue highly inconvenient, particularly with regard to carriages, which could only be productive of benefit to coach-makers.

The Earl of *Essex* said, that there was no crowd in Pall-mall at the time, nor any appearance of that sort of confusion that could require the interference of a peace officer; and yet, under such circumstances, St. James's-street and Pall-mall were blocked up by the military, without a single peace officer. This, he repeated, was a matter which did not concern him merely from his rank in that House or the country, but a practice which concerned every man, and one which, if not checked in time, might lead to great public mischief.

Lord *Grenville* said, he could not help rising to add his testimony to the remarks of his noble friend, that this was a new practice. The noble earl opposite was certainly mistaken, for the whole practice was comparatively of a very modern date. And here they might observe how these things grew. The practice had at first been overlooked, from its appearing to be of an extent not worthy of notice; and thus these things arose from such small beginnings, till at length they became dangerous evils. There was no mystery in this matter. The law had clearly provided for it. It was the duty of government to preserve the peace of the metropolis and the country, and when it became necessary to employ the military for that purpose, the executive government was not only justified, but bound so to employ them. But, then, the military ought to be employed only in aid, and under the direction of the civil power. In the present case, there was no magistrate, no peace officer; but the soldiers appeared to act entirely under military authority. If a constable had been in the way, it would have been perfectly proper in his noble friend to have given the soldier who, under the circumstances, stopped him, in charge to the constable; and if the constable had refused to take charge of him, he would himself have been amenable to the law for that breach of duty. Thus the law and the constitution were violated, when the military power was employed at St. James's, and in other places of the metropolis, to do the duties of peace officers. The next thing was this—that the military ought never to be employed, even for the preservation of the peace, unless the civil power at that particular place and time were found insufficient for that purpose. There was no pretence whatever here for saying that the civil power was not sufficient—that was quite clear. He was himself near the spot, and knew that there appeared no reason whatever to apprehend any thing like a tumult. There was neither tumult nor crowd; and were the streets of St. James's and Pall-mall to be blocked up with a military force, and the passage obstructed, because a number of carriages were assembled at the end of St. James's-park? It was an evil of a very serious and dangerous magnitude. A noble and learned lord had said the other night, with great force and justice, that it was essential to teach the people to look up to the civil power for the preservation of order; an observation which came well from him, considering the high station which he had filled. It was essential, certainly, so to teach the people; and in this metropolis, too, we ought to look to the civil, not to the military power, for the preservation of order. The military were unquestionably to be called when the civil power should be found insufficient. He recollected when, for three days together (during the riots in 1780), the capital was in flames, before, at last by an order in council, the military were called in to restore order, without the control of the magistrates. In the present instance, not even the slightest pretence existed for calling in the aid of the military at all. The subject was not a light one, nor one to be put off with frivolous pleasantry as a matter of no consequence. It was a matter of the utmost importance that the lives and property of his majesty's liege subjects should not rest solely on military protection, or be placed in the power of the military. And here a most material view of the question presented itself, which placed in a strong light the impropriety of this practice under the laws as they at present existed. Suppose that some one, not possessing the admirable temper of his noble friend, had suffered himself to be irritated upon being thus stopped on the king's highway, and seeing his horse and himself threatened with being cut down—if, in the moment of provocation at such an outrage, he had put the man to death who had thus stopped and threatened him, it would, in law, have been legal and justifiable homicide. If the soldier, on the other hand, in this illegal employment, had given a blow, whatever might have been the consequences of it, he would have been answerable even, if the effect had been fatal, to death itself. If, then, the executive government did mean to continue this practice, they ought not to lose a moment's time in proposing an alteration of the laws; for, as they stood at present, they were entirely unsuitable to such a practice.

The *Lord Chancellor*, however unwilling to prolong this conversation, found it impossible to allow certain doctrines which had been stated to pass without observation. As to what passed in the year 1780, he had only this to say, that he had the authority of the law of England for the proposition, that those who suffered the riots to go on for so long a time without taking effectual means to put a stop to them, when it was their business so to have done, were guilty of a supineness for which they were deeply responsible. The military were not employed merely as soldiers. Soldiers in this country did not, when they assumed the military character, cease to be citizens, and they might be employed as citizens for the preservation of the peace. With respect to the practice, ever since he had been in a situation which made it his duty to attend on these occasions at St. James's, he had seldom been able to get forward through the crowd without this sort of assistance. If he were asked, however, whether the military ought to be so employed on ordinary occasions, he should say, no; and he hoped the soldier would never forget that he was a citizen: but though a horse should be struck, he hoped it was too much to say that, for such an act as that, a man might be killed [Lord Grenville, "I stated no such thing."]. Then he had mistaken the noble baron; and he frankly confessed, that if a soldier were on such an occasion to strike the man, the doctrine of the noble baron appeared to him to be right: but the noble baron appeared to him not have sufficiently marked the distinction between the man and the horse, though he had no doubt he had mistaken what the noble baron had stated. But he himself desired that, when the military were employed, it should be only under the direction and superintendence of the civil power, and that they should not be employed without civil officers being present along with them.

Lord *Grenville* had no doubt that the noble and learned lord had no intention to misrepresent him, though he had mistaken what he (lord G.) had said; but he was at first surprised when he heard the noble lord state that he found it impossible to refrain from controverting his doctrines, and still more surprised when he heard the noble lord begin with the riots in 1780. He had never denied that the military were properly called in on that occasion. The noble and learned lord said, that a soldier still continued to be a citizen, and might be employed to preserve the peace as a citizen. True, the soldier might be employed to prevent the commission of a felony; but he had never heard that soldiers might be employed under their own officers, without the control or superintendence of the civil magistrate in cases of mere tumult. Then the noble lord said, that striking a horse would be no justification for killing a man. He certainly had never stated that it could, and he was astonished how any person could have imagined that he had made any such statement; but what he did say was this,—that where the soldier, in the commission of an unlawful act, threatened to cut down the man, and not the horse, he who commenced that unlawful act was answerable for the consequences, whatever they might be. He stated this to be the old recognised law upon the subject. He might be wrong in that; but if he was, he was sure that the best and most approved authors who had written on the law of England had laid it down wrong, and had lived long in a state of very profound ignorance of what the law was in such cases.

The Marquis of *Buckingham* did not wish to prolong the conversation on this certainly interesting and important topic; but seeing the noble secretary of state for the home department in his place, he wished to know from him, whether he was prepared to give any assurance to the House, that in future the practice should be discontinued of employing the military power to perform the duties of peace officers. If he would give such assurance, he should think it unnecessary to go any further; but if not, then he should think it his duty to move an address to the Prince Regent.

Viscount *Sidmouth* said, he knew nothing of the circumstances of the case which had been the subject of discussion; but if the noble marquis meant to state that the practice of calling out the military for the purposes adverted to, was in the department of the secretary of state, he would beg the noble marquis to understand that the secretary of state had no concern with those orders, neither had he any reason to believe that there were not peace officers at different parts at the time. There were no orders issued from the secretary of state's office on such occasions, nor had he any thing to do with it. In consequence, however, of what had been stated in another place, he had felt it his duty to interfere; and he assured the House that upon future occasions of a like nature, peace officers should be stationed, in order that the military might only act in aid of the civil power.

The Marquis of *Buckingham* considered the assurance given by the noble viscount as perfectly satisfactory; he must, however, observe, at the same time, that if any thing could aggravate the case, it was the circumstance of the military being employed without the concurrence of the secretary of state.

Lord *Holland* said, he had not been actually stopped, but he had had an opportunity of observing, that there was no crowd where the military were stationed, and that the men appeared to act under the positive orders of their own officers, without any control of the civil power. That was, as he conceived, a most illegal practice, and it was of the last importance that the people of the metropolis should not be familiarised to the sight of troops acting on such occasions without the control of the civil power, lest they should begin to look upon the military, not as their servants, which they really were, but as their masters. He wished to ask whether the noble earl had any objection to produce the order under which the military were sent to these stations?

The Earl of *Liverpool* could not see, after the assurance given by his noble friend, that the production of the order was at all necessary, or that it would answer any useful purpose. He admitted that the military ought to act there only under the control of the civil power; and that, if a contrary practice had grown up, it ought to be corrected: but the military might act on these occasions under the direction of the civil power.

Earl *Grey* said, he had heard the assurance given by the noble secretary of state for the home department with much satisfaction; but he hoped it would not be considered as displaying too great a degree of jealousy, if he expressed his wish that the assurance had been a little more precise. He had perceived for some time past a strong disposition to employ the military in the duties of peace officers in a manner inconsistent with the feelings and habits of a free people, and the nature of a free constitution. He hoped that practice would now be discontinued, and that they would return to the practice of the good old times, as his noble friend had expressed it: and that, from the spirit of a free people and their natural love of order, the exertions of the civil power alone would be sufficient to preserve the peace. As an assurance was given that the military should not be employed except under the direction of the civil power, he hoped, that the civil power would be the really efficient force, and that the same military parade would not be kept up, while a peace officer was stationed at the corner of a street, merely as a colour and pretence of sanction from the civil power. He hoped the true constitutional force would now be resorted to in good earnest, and that the military would only be employed in cases of necessity. He hoped this bad practice of employing soldiers in the duties of peace-officers, and that unconstitutional military parade on such occasions, to which there had been of late so strong a tendency, would be put down by the government itself; or, if not, that the practice would be watched with the utmost jealousy by parliament, which was the more necessary now when this disposition for military parade and display was growing upon us, and such immense sums had been voted to support a vast military establishment.

ABSENTEES.] Lord *Bulkeley*, seeing the noble earl at the head of the treasury in his place, wished to suggest to him the propriety of laying a tax upon persons going abroad. He was very glad for one, that the property tax had been disposed of in the way in which parliament had disposed of it; but he was aware of the difficulties of our financial situation, and thought this would be a very fair source of revenue, considering the number of persons of fortune who were going abroad, and thereby avoiding a great proportion of the taxes, to which their property would be liable if they remained. A tax upon passports, therefore, would be a good source of revenue, provided it could be rendered consistent with mercantile convenience.

The Earl of *Liverpool* said, the subject to which the noble lord had adverted had been under the consideration of the treasury and appeared very well worthy of attention. The suggestion had been made from various quarters, but he had as yet received no communication of a specific plan. However desirable the thing might be in principle, the difficulty was in the mode of carrying it into effect, consistently with the free communication which ought to be allowed as to mercantile transactions. The difficulty was, how to bring the matter to bear in such a way as not to do more harm by the mode of execution, than any good that could be produced from the tax in the way of revenue. The principle, however, was just in itself, that those should be made to contribute in this way to the resources of the state who, by going abroad, avoided all taxes direct and indirect.

The Earl of *Lauderdale* thought the declaration of the noble lord at the head of the treasury one of an alarming nature, and was surprised to hear it alleged that those who went abroad contributed very little to the revenue of the country. Did those who went abroad leave nothing behind that was liable to numerous and expensive taxes? But above all, in a mercantile country like this, that interest would not hear with patience of a proposition that struck more deeply at the root of all mercantile transactions than any one ever yet suggested. Even in the worst of times such a thing was never heard of: the restrictions and drawbacks which it must necessarily place upon the communications of this with every country in Europe would be incalculably injurious. He deeply regretted even the mention of such a proposition.

Lord *Holland* said, that the property of those who went abroad was still liable to the land tax, the succession tax, and many others; and he could not conceive how the noble earl at the head of the treasury could make out that they avoided all taxes direct and indirect.

The Earl of *Liverpool* said, that he had gone too far if he had said that they avoided all taxes direct and indirect: he only meant that they avoided a great many of the taxes.

Lord *Bulkeley* thanked the noble earl for the civility with which his proposition had been received, and was sorry that his old friend (lord Lauderdale) had been so hard upon him.

REDUCED ARMY ESTIMATES.] The Marquis of *Lansdowne* rose, in pursuance of his notice, to move an address to the Prince Regent for the Amended Army Estimates, which had been laid before the

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other House of Parliament. This motion he should preface with a very few observations, as he apprehended no objection would be made to it; but he should say a few words with a view to the bearing of the motion on the petitions upon the subject of economy; of which so many had been laid on their lordships table. These petitions, which complained of the distress of the country, proposed various modes of relief, which might be classed under three heads. Some of the petitioners proposed the removal of certain restrictions upon the trade of the country, in order that new channels for industry might be opened; others wished new restrictions to be imposed in favour of their own particular branches of industry: but all of the petitioners had concurred in the necessity of reducing the public expenditure. In endeavouring to call the attention of the House to this last mode, he was firmly convinced, that in the two other branches there was no material prospect of relief to the country. He agreed in the general principle of the removal of restrictions upon industry; but in the proposed removal of the prohibition of the exportation of wool, and the cultivation of tobacco, but small advantage, he conceived, could be expected; the experiment of cultivating tobacco had been tried in Ireland with no great success. As to the imposal of fresh restrictions for the benefit of any particular interest, though he did not go the length of disapproving of such relief in all circumstances, yet their lordships should consider that such restrictions in favour of one class must be injurious to the community in general, and could not be beneficial where the whole community was distressed, or the distress of one class had spread itself over all others. But as he thought these remedies would be of no avail, it became more imperatively his duty to co-operate as efficaciously as he could, in granting that relief which alone could be administered, and which formed at once the safest and most extensive relief which could be afforded. The great evil under which the country laboured was, that we had to support a public expenditure of 70 millions, while the whole rental of the country, and that a decreasing one, was 140 millions. Such a state of things could not exist without striking at the vital resources of the country. He was happy to see that one step had already been taken towards a reduction of this expenditure, and it was on this subject that he called for information. This reduction, it seemed, was not made on all the estimates, but on two only—the staff and the ordnance. The reduction on the staff was 40,287*l.* which in the course of the year was to be extended to 81,597*l.* Though he did not undervalue this reduction, he must be excused from yielding his belief that this was the lowest degree to which these estimates could be reduced. This reduction, did, however, afford a proof of the spirit in which the original estimates had been drawn up. For, notwithstanding the assurance which had been given at the beginning of the session of a strict attention to economy in general, and a special declaration that these estimates had been examined item by item, yet it appeared that there had been a most material oversight in several particulars, which it would not have been supposed would have easily escaped the attention of the ministers. The reduction in the amended estimates, was on the number of lieutenant-generals, major-generals, and adjutants, and on the sum to be expended in the erection of fortifications. These reductions had been made, in consequence of he knew not what, but certainly of something which had happened since their first formation. The estimates had been re-considered at a more genial season of the year than that at which they had been framed, and there seemed something in the third week of March which was much more favourable to economy than the beginning of January. But even in these estimates so amended, there seemed further room for reduction. The expense of the recruiting service in these amended estimates, was 140,000*l.* of which 36,063*l.* was for the recruiting staff. Now this recruiting staff amounted to half the sum which was expended in levy money, and the contingent expenses. This was a *primâ facie* ground for calling for retrenchment in this branch. In the official establishments there was a demand for the still further reduction, and even extinction of some offices. The commissary-general of musters, since the establishment of the adjutant and quarter-master generals on their present footing, had nothing to do but to muster the guards once a year, a duty so trivial that it might be transferred to either of the two officers above mentioned. Yet the expense of this office in the amended estimates was between 4 and 5000*l.* But if the duty of the commissary of musters was small in England, he had the authority of a committee of the House of Commons, in saying, that the duty of the muster-master general was nothing. The expense of this officer in the estimate was 15 or 1600*l.* a year, and if the fees received on promotions were calculated, it was 5000 or 6000*l.* a year. If he went into the whole of the estimates, he might detain their lordships for some time; but even in the amended estimates, there was another case which struck his view. In the case of clothing, it appeared that the expense of the veteran battalions and others, clothed by government, was 100 per cent. less than those clothed by the colonels. A saving might surely be looked for in this department. It might be said, that the clothing formed a part of the emoluments of the colonels, but this was surely a most un-economical mode of paying the colonels. Such were the retrenchments which he thought might be still made, even in the reduced estimates; but the work of reduction had been confined to the ordnance and staff. As the ministers, on a reconsideration of these estimates, had been able to make reductions, though they had said that those estimates had been previously fixed at the lowest possible degree, he trusted that some omission had also taken place in the other estimates, and that they would find in every one of them some possibility of retrenchment. The noble marquis concluded by moving "a humble Address to the Prince Regent, for the production of the reduced estimates of the staff and ordnance."

Earl *Bathurst* said, that as the noble marquis had coupled his expression of satisfaction at the reduction which had been made with some degree of censure on the ministers for having submitted the estimates in the state in which they had originally stood, he should explain the ground and nature of the reductions. These reductions had in part been contemplated; but it was also fair to say, that some of them had been made out of deference to the feelings of the country. If there was any blame to be attributed to such a concession, he was ready to bear his share of it. As to the generals, the charge for whom had been subtracted from the estimates, the reduction had been not on account of the number being reduced, but because some of them had been called on to perform their former duties without the staff allowances, for instance, the governor of Ceylon. The reduction in the expense of fortifications was by deferring to some future time the repairs which were not absolutely necessary. Whether this was sound policy he should not then consider; it certainly might lead to increased expense at some future time. It was on the question of the number of troops to be kept up that himself and his friends had declared that the estimates had been reduced to their lowest amount, and that opinion he still maintained.

The Marquis *Wellesley* congratulated their lordships upon the most satisfactory admission made by the noble earl who had just sat down, that some of the estimates had been reduced from deference to public opinion: he was glad to hear that this was the principle on which ministers intended in future to act, for it would, doubtless, lead to the most happy consequences. From his acquaintance with the noble earl, he was convinced that no man would act from more worthy or honourable motives; yet the conduct of the government, generally, had not hitherto discovered any extraordinary anxiety to yield to the expression of public opinion. The noble marquis said, he was anxious to take the present opportunity of examining the foundation of the enormous estimates upon the table; and he should do so with perfect candour and fairness, in imitation of his noble friend, who had frankly acknowledged, that, with regard to the whole amount of force to be employed on the peace establishment, the determination of ministers was unalterably fixed. Well knowing the state of public opinion, and hearing the readiness of government to pay obedience to it, it would be his object to show that that opinion was well founded; and he hoped, before he sat down, at least to convince the House, that it ought to insist upon a reconsideration of that great question on which ministers had so hastily and irrevocably formed their resolution.

The noble earl had said much upon the recent reduction of the staff—an alteration made within a few days: but who would not have imagined that the decision on the amount of that staff would at least have been the companion, if not the precursor, of the final arrangement regarding the total military force? for the numbers of the force alone could fitly regulate the numbers of the staff: yet if the doctrine of ministers were to be followed, the number of the staff was not to be governed by the magnitude of our army, but the magnitude of our army by the number of the staff; and in the same proportion were all the subordinate establishments to be regulated. The noble earl had correctly stated that the whole saving to the country by this reduction of the staff would not exceed 41,000*l.* a year; but who should say how large the saving might now be, if ministers proceeded on the plan they had hitherto pursued, of allowing the numbers of the staff officers to dictate the numbers of the army? He did not wish, however, to press the subject upon the other side of the House with the slightest feeling of hostility; he did not wish even to inquire whether the indecision they had lately shown ought or ought not to lessen the confidence to be placed in them; but at all events their conduct, if it did not establish their own incompetence, most clearly proved this—that they had greater confidence in the opinions of the people, and that deference was to be paid to their feelings and their wishes. This most material point was now settled beyond contradiction: it had not been merely mixed up with the decision, but was admitted in the argument, and allowed to be the sole reason for the alteration of the estimates. The triumph of public opinion was thus complete: let it animate the people—let it animate parliament not to proceed with animosity against ministers, not hastily to withdraw confidence of necessity placed in them, but—to proceed with a firm hand to lop off all needless excrescences, that only wasted the strength of the country, and with a steady undeviating purpose of rigid economy.

Noble lords on the other side had done but justice when they warmly applauded the magnanimity with which the people of England had sustained unexampled burthens during the war, which, by their patience and perseverance, had now been brought to so happy a conclusion. But what he would ask, had animated the people under their sufferings? What had induced them to submit without a murmur to an accumulated weight of taxation? What, but the dreadful image ever before their eyes of a triumphant despot trampling with sacrilegious foot over their sacred rights and liberties? To avoid the realization of this terrible picture, they had endured all deprivations and sacrifices with cheerful submission. But let others praise the patience of the people of England in war, he would applaud their conduct in peace: there it was that the real character of the nation had been best evinced, and best deserved applause: he desired no other topic of his warmest eulogy than the magnanimity with which they had borne, not the continuance of the war, but the breaking out of the peace; for he knew of no terms that could so well describe this new and severe infliction. Pressed down by a thousand distresses, all in different and hideous shapes—aggravated by a thousand insinuations that the rich were shaking off their burthens upon the poor, and that the poor were to become victims to the luxury of the great—tempted by a thousand fantastic schemes of pretended benefit to agriculture and commerce, to divert their attention from the main question, the people of England had still with a steady eye watched the progress of designs against their happiness. As in war nothing could withdraw them from an undaunted view of the dangers that surrounded them, so in peace, nothing could compel them to lose sight of the great primary source of all their sufferings and distresses—lavish expenditure in all the public establishments [Hear, hear]. This it was that claimed his applause—this it was that taught him to reverence the expression of national sentiment. Not that the people repined at the sums they had expended, or looked back with regret upon the past—not such a breath was to be heard from one end of the country to the other; but they did demand that, now the relations of peace were restored, the expenditure of war should not be continued. For this reason they would hail with joy even the small reduction that had been made: but was that to satisfy them? Was that all they had a right to expect? Had they no claim that the great source of expense in war should be diminished in peace, or were their expectations quite absurd when they required that the military establishments should be reduced?

The military expenditure might be divided into three branches: 1, That which related to the staff; 2, the composition and structure of the army; 3, the amount of force to be maintained in time of peace. As to the first, though something had been done, much remained to be accomplished; and he could not but augur favourably from the amended or supplementary estimate upon the table. With regard to the other two points, he had no hope that the noble lord in the blue ribband (Liverpool) would revise his establishments, unless he would also review the arguments on which he had persuaded himself that they were necessary; and for this reason he would shortly advert to the general topics. The noble earl had stated that, at the close of peace in 1792, Mr. Pitt, the greatest practical, and Mr. Burke the greatest theoretical statesman that had ever lived, had been deceived in their calculations regarding the tranquillity of France: for, contrary to their expectations, the flame of the revolution had burst out. The argument was, that the peace establishment of 1792 was formed upon so low a scale, that on the sudden breaking out of the war in 1793, England was not in a condition to meet it; and the deduction was, that this country ought now to keep up an enormous army, lest such an emergency should again occur. With great deference to his noble friend's philosophy, he had usually understood that the range of human prudence was bounded by human calculations; but the noble earl's caution went far beyond that extent, since he was for making provision against dangers beyond all human calculation, for he grounded the necessity of the present peace establishment solely upon the bare possibility of a new revolution like that of 1793. But even admitting that such an event was just within the verge of possibility, would the noble earl, or even the noble lord who made the treaties, argue for a moment, that no provision had been made against its recurrence? Of what use was our army in France, or the forces of the allies, if not to avert this imaginary mischief? Supposing a new revolution, contrary to all probability, should break out, could it instantly level Gibraltar with the ground, annihilate the fortifications of Malta, and destroy the garrison of the Ionian islands? Could it, on the sudden, drive us from our West Indian colonies, from Mauritius, the Cape, and Ceylon, or sweep us from the wide-spread continent of India? Yet the possibility of such miracles was the sole foundation for the proposed extent of our military establishments. Such fanciful dangers, would, he thought, be well qualified, not if he termed them within the limits of probability, but within the utmost verge of bare possibility. Thus the noble earl wished to provide against dangers nearly impossible, by imposing burthens quite insupportable [Hear, hear]. From the course of the noble earl's argument, it would be supposed that the low peace establishment on the breaking out of the war had occasioned imminent danger to the strongholds, to the trade, to the navy, and to the colonies of this country; but what was the fact? In the first three years did we lose all our colonies? No; we took every settlement belonging to the enemy. After a victory at sea, the glory of which had never been surpassed—not our commerce—not our navy; but—the commerce and navy of the French were annihilated. Let the noble earl, therefore, take his new French revolution, but with it he must take his historical precedent, which showed that his revolution, if expected, was scarcely to be dreaded; for from the first revolution we had drawn a lesson never to be forgotten, both from its value, and from the ability (he might say the tremendous ability, considering its effects on the arguments of the other side) with which it had been enforced by the noble marquis this night, and especially by the noble baron on a former occasion: that great lesson was, that the true bulwark of the British empire, its true and unconquerable strength, was its insular situation, which rendered it insensible to the shock of continental commotions, and which rendered useless during peace that military establishment that had been our glory during war.

To this situation that great statesman (whom living he had called his friend, and whose example in this respect he advised the noble earl to follow) had trusted in 1792, and his conduct would hand his name down to posterity as the wisest statesman this country had ever known. The reduction of the French colonies at the opening of the war had been the deliberate policy of Mr. Pitt, not the effect of sudden necessity: his first object was, to destroy the navy and commerce of France; and when that had been accomplished, he directed the efforts of the country against the continent; and the capture of Toulon (where a noble lord opposite had so much distinguished himself) had given a death-blow to the naval power of France. But when it became necessary to direct our exertions to the continent, what were the obstacles with which Mr. Pitt had to contend? First, a defective system of recruiting, which compelled him to introduce into the army a description of officers very incompetent to their duty; next, a total want of staff officers fit to take the command of our armies; and thirdly, the non-existence of a commissariat; for not even the frame-work of this important and now perfect establishment was then erected. At that time, also, it would be recollected, there were no institutions for producing an efficient staff. Such were the obstacles Mr. Pitt had to surmount; and with pleasure the noble marquis turned to a view of our present situation—to improvements in all these respects, and especially in the condition of the soldier, though, by a noble lord elsewhere, it had been termed a night-mare upon the country when sleeping in a state of tranquillity. In 1793, Mr. Pitt had not the advantage of a fine army trained in a series of glorious services in France and the Peninsula: England had now an efficient staff, capable of leading her armies to victory in all quarters of the globe, and regimental officers well acquainted with the business of their respective ranks, and affording a constant supply of men educated in science, and perfected in service. But because he applauded the institutions in which these officers were brought up to arms, was it to be supposed that he wished them continued on their present expensive establishment? On the contrary, they ought to be reduced as low as was consistent with the preservation of their great frame-work, which, in his honour and conscience, he believed to form one of the great bulwarks of national independence and constitutional freedom. But if they were continued, the less was the necessity for lavish expenditure in supporting a large force under arms; and he protested before God, that the great reason which induced him to support these institutions in war, was the conviction that they might be the means of great public saving in peace [Hear, hear!]. Of all these advantages Mr. Pitt was deprived, and yet he held it his duty to reduce the peace establishment to its lowest limits. The noble marquis, therefore, called upon the noble earl to imitate the example, and to take into consideration, not only the superior advantages he possessed, but the greater sufferings the people endured. No greater boon could be offered to the nation, and no more effectual means could be adopted by the noble earl of confirming himself in the esteem of his countrymen, as an honest man and an able statesman, than the reduction of the proposed military establishments.

Of the constitutional question regarding a standing army, the noble earl had also taken a most extraordinary and mistaken view, when he asserted that in sir Robert Walpole's administration, on an average 18,000 men were retained in the country. The fact, however, was, as appeared from the appropriation acts of the time, and from other authorities which he had consulted, that the standing army never exceeded 14 or 15,000 men; and during many years of peace it was below 12,000, being increased to 18,000 men only, if the fortress of Gibraltar and the island of Minorca, then occupied by us, were included in the calculation. The force at home did not reach 18,000 men, until a royal message was sent down in 1745, alleging designs of the king's enemies and the pretender against his throne and government. The noble earl had ingeniously endeavoured to show that the army actually in England was only 21,000 men, by stating that 7,000 were always upon the seas on their way to relieve foreign garrisons; but the House would recollect that, from the moment the establishment was voted, it was under the control of the Crown, and was disposable at the will of the Crown, and it might perhaps be found convenient, at a future time, not to send so large a force to our colonies, while an increased army was kept over the people at home [Hear, hear!]. Was the army of France to be omitted in a constitutional view of the question, or was it to be considered as affording no security to our possessions in the Mediterranean? Yet even this force might be employed unconstitutionally against the people, should it at any time be thought necessary so to use it by the advisers of the Crown. Was the army of Ireland to be held as nothing, after the house had heard that, in that country, the sources of justice were polluted, that law exacted no obedience, and that it was only enforced by the terror of the sword? Yet the noble lords on the other side were anxiously recommending the improvement of the minds of the Irish, and asserted that they had adopted measures to accomplish that object! What were those measures?—the imposition of an army of 25,000 men, who were to superintend the education of one generation, and the executions of another: a soldier was at once to be the teacher of refined morals, and the minister of civil justice [Hear, hear!]. The great, and indeed the only argument for this expenditure was, however, the danger of war; but he begged to ask those who employed it, whether they had forgotten the army under the duke of Wellington, at this moment nearly as large, and quite as efficient, as at any period during the contest which it had gloriously terminated under its illustrious leader? If a new war should break out, was not that army upon the spot, equipped and fashioned to our hands, and exceeding in number any army ever maintained abroad by Great Britain? Was it not flushed with victory, confident in its strength, and adequate to our protection in any emergency?

The noble marquis said, he had thus generally stated his views, omitting all remarks upon the details, because he thought no minuteness of inquiry could add strength to the broad case made out against the proposed military establishments. He earnestly recommended to the noble earl and his colleagues to consider the arguments which they stated had induced them irrevocably to form their judgment. He felt the most painful anxiety upon the subject, because, on his honour and conscience, he declared he was convinced, that if the present estimates were exacted, the most ruinous consequences would ensue to the country. With regard to India he had already given his opinion, but he had since re-examined his correspondence, and was most thoroughly persuaded that 5,000 men on the continent of India, and 1,000 men in each of the colonies of Mauritius, the Cape, and Ceylon, might well be spared: by this reduction, it would be observed, that 1,000 men, of what was called the relief, would be rendered unnecessary; so that in the whole the expense of about 9,000 men of that division only would be saved to the nation. It seemed that the troops of the company were to be entirely omitted in the calculations, while those supplied by this government were ranked under a very peculiar class—that of forces maintained in foreign and conquered nations. According to the estimates, there appeared to be two conquered nations—the one was France, and the other the East Indies. This arrangement at first excited his surprise; but on inquiry he found the fact to be, that the noble earl had really conquered the East India company with the assistance of a powerful ally, the court of King's Bench; and, armed with the terrors of a mandamus, that he had carried hostility into the very heart of the directors, who narrowly escaped being taken and sent captives to the King's-bench prison. To what further extremities this new war might have been carried, the noble marquis said, he could not guess: but it seemed much more probable than the noble earl's apprehended French revolution, that government would have had to direct a dispatch "to our governor-general and council of Calcutta in the King's-bench prison" [Hear, hear! and a laugh]. It was extremely probable, however, that by affording this assistance to the company in men, they might in this very year come to parliament for assistance in money, not to pay our troops, but their own army, so that we should entail upon ourselves a double burthen.

He begged again to assure the noble earl, that what he had said had not been dictated by a spirit of hostility, and he hoped he had not used the language of hostility; he really placed much greater confidence in the noble earl's judgment than in his declarations, and though he should rise to-night and re-state that his mind was unalterably fixed that no reduction ought to be attempted, he (marquis W.) would still indulge the hope that further reflection would produce in the noble earl a conviction that some mitigation of this military infliction was due to the suffering people, whose petitions would soon fill the table, if ministers injudiciously persisted in their present course. But though the noble earl should conclude the debate with the assertion of his resolute perseverance, the noble marquis said, he would still trust to a favourable change: he would appeal from Philip in parliament to Philip in private—from Philip at his seat in the House, to Philip at his seat in the country. The noble earl, he believed, did not suffer himself to advert to the real wants and distresses of the people echoed from all quarters of the kingdom, or he would feel the force of the lines of the great poet—

O yet a nobler task awaits thy hand,
(For what can war but endless war still breed?)
Till truth and right from violence be freed,
And public faith cleared from the shameful brand
Of public fraud. In vain doth valour bleed,
While avarice and rapine share the land!

To rouse the feelings of our injured country by perseverance in unjust oppression was indeed dangerous, but much more injurious would it be to debase and crush the generous spirit of the English nation by the weight of military despotism: both these extremities were to be avoided, and he conjured the noble earl to re-consider the enormous estimates proposed, to reduce the military system within due bounds, to cease to tax the industry of the severely distressed, and the result would be—fresh resources and a contented people.

The Earl of *Liverpool* said, he would not complain of the course pursued by the noble lords opposite, who had not only ranged through the estimates, but again descanted on the policy of the establishment; but though such a proceeding was perfectly in their power, yet it was unexpected, nor did he think it necessary to follow them through all their arguments. The noble lord who spoke last had professed a disinclination to accuse ministers; yet he had had recourse to a rather unparliamentary expedient in assuming the alterations made in the estimates as a subject of attack and animadversion. The real question was as to the amount of men; and here he had no hesitation in saying, that if any concessions on minor points (however trifling he might deem them) would render the estimates more palatable to the public, he should, as a minister for the public, think it his duty to give way; he certainly would not fight about minor points, however strongly he might be disposed to fight about the main question of policy. The noble marquis had expressed an opinion that the staff and the numerical army should bear an exact proportion to each other, but the noble marquis's argument was founded on a fallacy: he did not consider that this was the first year of peace; that 50,000 men were to be disbanded; that the army in France was to be diminished; that, in fact, the country was in a state of being reduced, but not yet reduced to a peace establishment. The staff, therefore, was required for many operations necessary for the reduction of the army; after this event, which he would not deny, would be somewhat accelerated by the parliamentary call for economy, the staff also might be gradually reduced. The noble marquis had argued as if he (lord Liverpool) had called for a large establishment, in the contemplation of a new revolution: but this was to mistake the whole scope of his argument. He had, indeed, said that, with such a precedent as the revolution before our eyes, it became us to use extraordinary precaution, especially when in former times two such eminent statesmen as Mr. Pitt and Mr. Burke had not anticipated that revolution. But the chief object of his former observation was to show that on a fair comparison of the present period with that of 1792, it would be seen that the established force was not greater than now. The force employed in the old colonies was nearly the same as now—and the increase of force was occasioned by the new colonies, which, twenty in number, whether the policy of keeping them were good or bad, yet, if kept, required to be defended by a military force. It was obvious, also, that a force at home was necessary to feed this force abroad? unless, indeed, it should be most inhumanly suggested, that the army which had deserved so well of the country, and which was now to be sent to different foreign stations, should be transported for life. The noble lord who spoke last had given an opinion as to the force necessary for India; but however he might be disposed to respect the opinions of the noble lord, yet he could not help distinguishing between the suggestions of a person in office, and therefore responsible, and not in office, and therefore not responsible. In courts of law he believed it was not unusual to draw a distinction between judicial and extra-judicial opinions: the latter of which, though uttered by the most eminent judges, were not of equal weight with the former, though emanating from inferior judges. Upon the whole, he was as much disposed to be economical as any man, but at the same time he would not compromise the security of the country.

The Marquis *Wellesley*, in explanation, said, that his opinion, whether judicial or extra-judicial, had been quoted on a former occasion, because ministers thought it would sanction the maintenance of 20,000 men in India in time of peace: now, however, that the opinion was found to refer to a state of war only, it was of course rejected by ministers as utterly worthless, and its weight, forsooth, was to be destroyed by calling it extra-judicial.

The Earl of *Rosslyn* observed, that after the peace of Amiens, the estimates had been voted first for three months, and afterwards for sixty-one days; whereas in the present instance, ministers had called upon the parliament to vote a sum for the whole year, though, by their own confession, they knew that the whole sum demanded would not be wanted. It seemed as if they had proposed the vote in the first instance in its fullest extent, to try if parliament would bear it; and then if they found it objected to, they could afford to spare the reduction of a part; on their own showing, it was evident that some reduction was to have been made, whether parliament had interfered or not, and thus ministers would have had the extra money at their own disposal. The noble lord then referred to the subject of the French contributions, and stated, that on this point ministers were either ignorant, or had deceived parliament. It had been pretended that this country would not have to defray any of the expenses of the army in France. It appeared, now, however, on the new estimates, that this country was to be charged with the payment of that army, at least in part; for the sum of 280,000*l.* was charged on the estimates. What was the meaning of this?

The Earl of *Liverpool* said, that the difference between the contributions and the expense of the army, would require to be made up by parliament.

The Earl of *Rosslyn* said, that by comparing the British share of the contribution with the expense of the British army, there would be a deficiency of more than 200,000*l.* this year, and 480,000*l.* hereafter, to be made up by parliament. It was fit the country should know this, as there had been an attempt to keep up a deception on this subject.

Lord *Grenville* said, that the question which had been brought under the consideration of their lordships was one of the most important, if not the most important that had ever occupied the attention of parliament. His objections to the system now openly avowed by the noble earl, of making this country a great armed military nation in time of peace, rested upon various grounds. In the first place, it entailed upon the people an enormous lavish expenditure of money, which neither our finances nor our resources were able to meet; but even that evil, though a great one in the present moment, when we were labouring under the greatest distress of every kind, when we were suffering in our agriculture, and in our commercial and financial interests, was nothing in his apprehension, compared to the dangers that threatened the constitution. What was the course of argument pursued by the noble earl? He did not pretend to affirm that there existed any immediate cause for alarm, any immediate occasion for so large a military establishment. No! his doctrine was, that we were to make ourselves a great military power, in order that we might be prepared to meet any danger which it was within the verge of possibility might arise. And to sanction that doctrine he reminded their lordships of a former case, when in the very midst of peace, in the midst of a security which the wisest and most enlightened statesmen of that day believed to be permanent, great perils burst forth, which compelled us to assume an attitude of war. The noble earl further stated, at least such was the inference to be drawn from his speech, that with that example before our eyes, it would be unwise and impolitic not to hold ourselves in such a state of preparation as would enable us, upon any emergency, to embark in another war of equal extent and of equal danger, that so we might bring it to a conclusion equally glorious, and equally triumphant. But how, he would ask the noble earl, was it that we had been enabled to bring the late war to such a glorious issue? By the adoption of that very system which he now condemned. It was because Mr. Pitt was wiser than the noble earl—it was because we practised economy in time of peace, because we reduced our establishments, because we husbanded our resources, that we had the means, the energy, the power to prosecute that tremendous conflict to its issue. By persevering in that wise and politic system also, it was to be ascribed that we were the only nation of Europe which had not sunk under the pressure of circumstances—that we had not been overwhelmed by that which had overwhelmed every other country [Hear!]. With respect to the great military force that was to be maintained, it now appeared that even the army in France was ultimately to come with some pressure, some burthen upon the people of this country, notwithstanding all the delusive representations hitherto made, leaving it to be supposed that the entire expense of that army would be defrayed by the contributions to be paid by France. It appeared indeed, as if no arrangement, no negotiation, no conditions could take place between this government and the government of other countries, without entailing some additional burthen upon ourselves. The noble earl, however, stated that the safety of the country depended upon having the force in question. Upon that statement he should offer a few remarks presently; but he first wished to press upon their lordships' attention that the proposed military force would require an expenditure of thirteen millions, and that there was an actual deficiency in the revenue, which was to meet it, of sixteen millions. Was there no danger in that even? Was nothing to be apprehended from the alarming fact, that our means to defray our military expenditure were deficient by millions? Was that circumstance to be kept wholly out of view? Were we to go on plunging from one difficulty to another without a moment's pause to reflect how we should extricate ourselves from them, or how we might avoid them altogether? He was prepared, however, to contend that there was not the smallest occasion for the alarm which the noble earl seemed to feel. But even if he thought otherwise, and if he thought that great dangers might arise, still he should not be willing to exchange our real strength, which consisted in our navy, for the fallacious and dangerous strength that could be derived from a large military establishment. He would say, however desirable such an establishment might be; however great the good might be, it was attainable only at the expense of a much greater evil, an evil which overwhelmed in its consequences every possible benefit that could be obtained. From precisely the same principle he would say, if it were argued that reducing the military force would save nothing to the country, still reduce it, because though you saved nothing else, you would at least save the constitution [Hear, hear!]. He believed, however, not only that the army might be reduced, but that by reducing it, a large saving to the public would take place. Nothing which he had yet heard, nothing which he had yet read upon the subject, no inquiry which he had been able to make, at all convinced him that the establishments might not be reduced to what they were in the year 1792. Since the last discussion which had taken place, he had gone through all the statements made by the noble earl, and he was convinced he could demonstrate to the satisfaction of their lordships, and to the satisfaction of the noble earl himself, that the military force might be reduced one-third, with perfect safety to the interests of this country. He was prepared to substantiate that assertion, by going through the estimates item by item, if the noble earl wished it. He excepted Ireland from his calculation. With respect to India, his noble friend had unanswerably proved that the army there might be reduced one-third in time of peace; and the only answer made by the noble earl was, that his noble friend did not think a reduction of one-third could take place in time of war. Such an answer would not, he apprehended, be any very great imputation upon the sagacity or wisdom of his noble friend. With respect to the colonies, the whole argument in favour of the force to be kept up there, went upon the fallacy that the old colonies must have the same establishments as they had before, and that the new colonies must have such establishments as the noble earl might deem necessary for their safety. Now, with respect to the first part of the argument, its fallacy was at once proved, by merely reflecting upon the great difference between the present peace and all former ones, and he would venture to say, that if we had obtained not one additional colony, the present state of Europe would be a sufficient ground for maintaining a less establishment in our old colonies than was formerly kept up in them [Hear, hear!].—But what was the nature of our new colonies? Had they any value at all? Undoubtedly they had; but no man would venture to say that their value was of a commercial character. Our old colonies were already labouring under the greatest difficulties in finding a market for their produce, and it would be considered as no small evil to bring the produce of the new colonies in competition with them. Their only value, in fact, consisted in this, that they were strong military points, which added to the security of our former possessions in that part of the world. When they belonged to our enemies, then it was thought necessary to keep a large force in our old colonies, to protect them from any sudden attack. Now they belonged to us, and form a powerful defence; and still we are to keep up the same extent of force, though no one can say where is the danger which threatens in any quarter to require such a force.—He would next advert to Canada. Could any man believe that the Canadian frontier was weakened by exchanging a wilderness for a colony of free and loyal inhabitants? [Hear, hear!] The events of the last war had proved the value of such a defence. If the province of Upper Canada was not over-run by the enemy, to what cause was it to be attributed? To the military preparations made at home for its defence? None were made. To the naval force stationed there? There was none. No! its safety was owing to the spirit, the activity, the fortitude, the loyalty of that very population which was now described as inadequate for its defence [Hear, hear!].—With respect to Gibraltar, Malta, and the Ionian islands, what occasion could there be for so large a proportion of force for their defence? He would take the latter in particular. He would ask their lordships to look at the political situation of those islands—at the terms upon which they were surrendered to us—at the manner in which they came into our hands—at the neighbours by whom they were surrounded, and say whether they required any force at all? He firmly believed that a serjeant of marines, with a few men under him, to hoist the colours on a birth-day, were all the military aid which was necessary for them.—As to the number of men which were stated to be necessary for reliefs, that argument had been so triumphantly answered by a noble friend, that he should feel it necessary only to recall it to the recollection of their lordships. He was convinced, therefore, that in every one of the colonies, and above all in Great Britain, the military force might be reduced at least one-third; such a reduction was not only practicable, but expedient. The amount of saving, if a reduction to that extent were adopted, he would now briefly show from a rough, *primâ facie* calculation, founded upon the estimates themselves. They were, in fact, the only ground upon which he could go, as he was, of course, possessed of no official information beyond what they communicated. The whole force, according to the reduced estimates, would require a sum of about 9,500,000*l.* from which was to be deducted 500,000*l.* for savings, that would arise in the course of the year, leaving a round sum of 9,000,000*l.* The extraordinaries were expected to amount to between three and four millions, so that twelve millions might be considered as the aggregate of the expense incurred for the 99,000 men. Of that sum a considerable portion did not depend upon the amount of force to be kept up, being for the half-pay, supernumeraries, &c. They amounted to about two millions, which would reduce the whole to ten millions. There might, perhaps, be other articles of a similar description not distinctly specified, which would probably require one million more, and that deduction would leave the gross amount at nine millions. If, then, the army were reduced one-third, that was from 99,000 to 66,000, he should like to know how it could be proved that one-third of those nine millions would not also be saved. The course, however, which he would earnestly recommend their lordships to pursue was, to go into a detailed examination of all the estimates, item by item, and he had not the smallest doubt it would be found that a reduction to the extent which he had stated might be accomplished. The object was one of infinite importance, not merely in a financial point of view—for he valued the constitution of the country above its finances [Hear, hear!]. The more he observed the practices and notions which were becoming prevalent with respect to military establishments, the influence which those notions had upon all ranks of society, and the dangers with which they were pregnant, the more he was convinced that a great and alarming evil was threatening the liberties and independence of the country. The perils in which we were placed from our agricultural, from our commercial, and from our financial distresses, he acknowledged to be great and imminent; but much greater and more imminent, in his opinion, were those perils which menaced us from the maintenance of so immense a standing army in a time of profound peace [Hear, hear!].

The motion was then agreed to.

British Army in France.] The Earl of *Rosslyn* again called the attention of the House to the subject of the French contributions. He thought it a most shameful circumstance that ministers should have received a sum of 880,000*l.* from France, and have applied it to their own uses without accounting to parliament. He concluded with moving for an account of the monies so received.

Lord *Holland* animadverted in severe terms upon the conduct of the noble earl, in not having come down to parliament in the first instance, and communicated the circumstance. The precedent, he contended, was one of a most alarming and dangerous description. There was a period in our history in which similar proceedings had nearly subverted the liberties of the country. Charles 2nd and James 2nd received pecuniary aid from France, for the avowed purpose of subduing our independence. He really thought that some further explanation than what had yet fallen from the noble earl was necessary, and in his opinion he could not do better than come down to that House with a bill of indemnity for the share which he had had in the transaction.

The Earl of *Liverpool* said, that the paper moved for by the noble marquis would bring the subject regularly before their lordships, when it could be dispassionately argued, and when he should be prepared to give every explanation. All he could say at present was, that the sum in question was part of a contribution which the allied powers, having military possession of France, levied upon that country, and which, by a convention entered into, was to be employed in defraying the expenses of the armies to be maintained there.

Lord *Grenville* observed, that the resolution of the House of Commons, for paying the British army in France, had no reference whatever to any possible surplus of expense which might arise beyond what the contributions paid by the French government would cover. The object of that resolution was a wise and constitutional one. It was to get rid of that dangerous anomaly in our constitutional practice, of having a large army in a foreign country, paid by a foreign power, and consequently placed beyond the control and influence of parliament. He would venture to say, that neither the House of Commons nor the country anticipated the idea of any charge falling to us for the support of the army in France. The expense of that army was understood to be completely provided for, by the contributions payable from the French government. He considered the present subject as one of the greatest importance, in a constitutional point of view, that a British minister should receive large sums from a foreign state, and appropriate them without making any communication to parliament; and he trusted that it would be brought before their lordships, in a manner different from the present accidental mode of discussing it.

The Earl of *Lauderdale* condemned the proceedings of the noble earl, as unprecedented in the history of the country, and as being fraught with the greatest danger to the constitution. If so large a sum as 880,000*l.* might be thus received and employed by a minister without the sanction of parliament, why might not a much larger sum be so received and so employed? Or why might not a British army be kept in any part of the continent in the pay of a foreign power, without any control over it by the parliament of England? It was impossible to view such proceedings without the greatest alarm, and their lordships would abandon their duty if they did not make it a subject of their most serious and deliberate consideration.

Earl *Grey* said, he could not suffer the present discussion to close without expressing the sentiments of indignation and astonishment with which he was almost overpowered. He did not mean to accuse the noble earl of a deliberate intention to deceive the country with respect to the support of the British army in France, but certainly the effect of his declarations upon that subject had been to deceive it in the most decided manner. Until that night it was universally believed, that the charge for maintaining that army would be covered wholly and exclusively by the amount of contributions to be paid by the French government; but when his noble friend, with that acuteness which distinguished him upon all questions of that kind, showed that in the present year we should, in fact, have to pay above 200,000*l.*, and in the next year nearly 480,000*l.*; then, and not till then, the noble earl had admitted the fact, because he could not disprove it. With respect to what had been the conduct of the noble earl in appropriating the 880,000*l.* already received, without making any communication to parliament upon the subject, he did not wish to use any harsh or intemperate expression, but he would venture to say, that it was an act of delinquency on the part of that noble earl, which in the better times of our history, would have been followed by an act of punishment [Hear, hear!]. As had been well observed by his noble friend who spoke last, if the principle were once admitted that a British minister might receive and apply such a sum, at his own pleasure and discretion, where would the practice stop, or why might not a larger sum, as many millions for instance, be received and used in the saume unconstitutional manner? [Hear, hear!] The noble earl (Liverpool) had said that this sum was not obtained in consequence of the treaty, or of any convention, but was paid as part of a contribution into the military chest of this country, prior to the conclusion of the treaties. The treaties, it was well known, were finally ratified on or before the 20th of November, prior to which, according to the noble lord's own account, the money had been obtained, and parliament had been convened on the 1st of February, yet on this day, the 5th of April, their lordships had for the first time heard of such a sum being procured [Hear!]. And how had they been informed of it? Not by any wish of the noble earl to give them information, but solely through accident, in consequence of the vigilance of his noble friend. No disposition appeared to exist in the minds of ministers to give any account of this sum to parliament. It was to remain locked up, not in the view of defraying the expenses to which the country had already been put, not with the intention of, in the smallest degree, alleviating the pressure under which the country groaned, but it was to remain there prospectively to gratify the inclinations of ministers in future. He put it to their lordships, whether such conduct was consistent with the high responsibility which ministers owed to parliament. Was it either congenial to the principles of the constitution, or to the respect which ministers should naturally feel for parliament? Such an iniquitous transaction could not be too severely reprobated. It was a departure from the line of duty which ministers owed to the country, it was a contempt for the dignity and authority of parliament. He certainly thought it impossible for parliament to shut their eyes on such conduct, and if they did not censure and punish those who had been concerned in it, they ought at least to guard the public against the daring impositions of such men in future.

The motion was then agreed to.

Bank Loan Bill.] On the motion for the Bank Loan bill being read a second time,

Lord *Grenville*, in a most eloquent speech, stated his entire dissatisfaction with the bargain ministers had concluded with the bank, and which they had now submitted to parliament. It was a bargain unjust in its consequences to the people of England, and conducted on the most improper principles by ministers. After a statement of the balances in the bank belonging to the public in 1806, 1807, 1811, and 1816, his lordship observed, that he had read with peculiar satisfaction a speech lately published by Mr. Grenfell, which contained the most luminous, admirable, and unanswerable details he had ever met with. In that pamphlet it was shown in the most satisfactory manner, that in all their transactions with ministers, the bank had been peculiarly successful in promoting their own interests, while those of the public had been sacrificed. The labours of that independent and public spirited gentleman would be crowned by public advantage. Motions founded on his lucid statement might be lost, but the object would be attained. He had no doubt, but the voice of the country, aided by the force of truth, would compel ministers, however reluctantly, to make a powerful stand against the bank. Without the aid of parliament, the treasury were unable to make this stand, for the bank had now become too powerful for them. But he predicted that by clear statements of the nature of things, the eyes of the public would no longer be shut, but that they would hereafter compel the bank to do their duty. The noble lord then entered into a detail of the circumstances connected with his negociation with the bank in 1806-7, and concluded with a powerful appeal to the feelings of their lordships against the bargain concluded by ministers. At the present period they had pledged themselves to adopt measures of economy, yet they sacrificed 240,000*l.* of the public money every year without any plausible reason. The country had been told of the threats which the bank held out, unless parliament sanctioned this bargain. These threats were to him a matter of little moment, for if ministers had but the firmness and resolution to do their duty, the bank could not and would not refuse to give them the money.

The Earl of *Liverpool* argued the propriety of the agreement with the bank, from the charter granted to it by Mr. Pitt in 1799, from the arrangement made by Lord Grenville in 1806, and from the resolutions adopted by parliament in consequence of the report of a committee expressly appointed in 1808. The balances in the bank he considered to be now decreasing in consequence of the diminution of public expenditure, and the present bargain had been conducted on as liberal principles as any ever adopted by any administration. He deprecated the idea of withdrawing the balances out of the bank on this principle, that as the bank paid the dividends of the public creditor it was fair they should have some funds to meet the expenditure.

The Marquis of *Lansdowne* protested against the agreement, as granting a power to the bank which they had no right whatever to in time of peace, as a departure from the original principles on which the bank was founded, and giving them an advantage over the public interests for which the public had no equivalent. He did not wish parliament to withdraw its support from those channels which had usually supplied the public; but he wished them manfully to look the bank in the face, and to examine every transaction with the utmost rigour, and see whether or not there was equity in it. He would hereafter more fully consider this subject; but in the mean time concurred most heartily in the luminous view which his noble friend had taken of it.

The Earl of *Lauderdale* expressed his concurrence with the sentiments of his noble friends, and declared his entire dissatisfaction with the bargain made by ministers, as unjust to the public, in consequence of the very great ascendency it gave the bank. Ministers seemed not to know their own powers; and whatever was the cause which they might assign for the transaction, it must be obvious to all, that had they spoke with firmness and energy, the bank would have agreed to their terms. He deprecated the continuance of such power in the bank, as dangerous to the interests of the public.

The bill was then read a second time.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, April 5.

CHEESE DUTIES BILL.] Mr. Robinson moved, that the butter duties bill should be committed, which was accordingly done, and the report ordered to be received on Monday. Upon the motion for going into a committee on the Cheese Duties Bill,

Sir *M. W. Ridley* said, he was afraid the proposed duty upon the importation of cheese would operate not as a protecting one, but amount almost to a prohibition, which would have the effect of rendering that article of subsistence, so important to the poorer classes, much dearer than it now was. He admitted that it was very proper to protect particular branches of industry, but that protection ought not to be at the expense of the interests of the whole. No doubt there were some agricultural districts which had materially suffered by the unrestricted importation of foreign cheese, but then there were other districts which were greatly benefited by it. That part of the country, for example, which he had the honour to represent, was not a dairy country, and would therefore derive no advantage from the regulations of the present bill. It certainly struck him that the proposed rate of duty was too high, as it was intended to impose a duty of 10*s*. 6*d*. per cwt. on all foreign cheese imported in British ships, and 13*s*. upon all which was imported in foreign ships. He should therefore move as an amendment to that clause, that the former be reduced to 8*s*., and the latter to 10*s*.

Mr. *Robinson* said, that he had endeavoured, in fixing the rate of duty, to avoid, as much as possible, any thing which might tend to make the measure operate as a prohibition, and he had therefore taken it in reference to the proportion between the prices of butter and cheese, namely, at about one half. He could assure the committee that nothing was further from his intention than to make it a prohibitory act, and if it should prove so, which he did not anticipate, it would be necessary to re-consider the subject.

Mr. *Calcraft* was not friendly to duties generally on articles of necessity; but the effect of the butter protection would be to make the butter dealers in Holland turn their attention chiefly to cheese. This was, therefore, a particular case. One effect of the protecting duty would be to give more means to the farmer of employing the poor. This question of the cheese trade did not relate particularly to Ireland; but had grown up out of the regulation for the butter trade. In relieving Ireland we must not press too much on interests in England. The present measure was only to be considered as a measure of experiment; and nothing of a prohibitory nature he believed was intended. We had only to consult our own interests by a protecting, and not by a prohibitory duty.

Sir *C. Burrell* thought, that however necessary it might be to support one branch of the agricultural interest, it should not be done at the expense of other interests.

Mr. *Robinson* observed, that the object of the measure was not revenue.

Mr. *Marryat* said, that if they proceeded too far on such subjects, they would occasion retaliatory acts by other powers who might also give more favourable terms to other countries. More harm than good might, therefore, be done to the landed interests.

Sir *John Newport* thought the best

policy was, without falling into the mistake of thinking that foreign powers were to be conciliated or irritated according to the rate of duty imposed, to fix it at such a rate as our own interests required. He objected to the amendment.

The amendment was rejected, and the original resolution agreed to.

Public Buildings — Board of Works.] Mr. *Bankes* wished to take notice of a public expense which he was sorry to find occasion to bring before the House. The building now used for the office of the secretary of state for the home department was one of the few old buildings that preserved a respectable appearance. It was now undergoing considerable external alterations by buttresses of yellow bricks, which every gentleman, in coming down to the House, must have observed. It appeared, before these alterations were commenced, to be a stable building, and very likely to last long. This was one of the first acts of the new board of works, and as it was not very creditable to their judgment, he only wished to know if it had the sanction of the treasury.

Mr. *Addington* was not surprised at his hon. friend's question, because he was as much astonished as any other person could be when he saw the front of the building in question covered with scaffolding, more especially at a season when it was desirable to place as few obstructions as possible in the way of members going to and from the House. In truth, the matter had been complained of to him by many of his hon. friends, to whom he had given the same answer he was now about to give to the hon. gentleman, namely that the proceeding was wholly without his knowledge, or that of the treasury. He had, however, taken the liberty of sending for Mr. Bacon, the chief clerk of the board of works, who was a most intelligent man, to question him upon the subject, and from him he understood that the work had been undertaken at this inconvenient season, in consequence of the danger which existed from the dilapidated state of the front of the building, and the apprehension that some of the large stones of which the buttresses were composed, falling on the passengers. This gentleman was not aware, however, of the source from whence the instructions came, that the building in its appearance should undergo such a radical reform. The alteration, however, was by no means with the concurrence of the treasury.

Sir *C. Burrell* said, the thanks of the House were due to the hon member who had brought this subject forward. He decidedly condemned the bad taste in which the repairs were making; but that was not all, if the board of works had expressly sought for an opportunity of doing their job twice over, they could not have fixed upon a better time than the present. It was his misfortune to know something about building, and he would venture to affirm, that at this period of the year it was impossible to make good masonry. No cement would harden properly, and whatever might be done now, would have to be done again in a very short time. He trusted the hon. gentleman would not stop here, but would submit some motion for inquiry to the House, by which it would be ascertained upon what principle the board of works had presumed to act without the sanction of the treasury.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* observed, that it was very probable the board of works had communicated with the treasury upon the subject, and that they were acting under its orders, though he certainly was not prepared to state that the fact was so. With respect to the manner in which the repairs were carrying on, he was certainly as much surprised as his hon. friend could be at them; for he unquestionably considered them as a deformity.

Mr. *Fremantle* thought the subject was one which ought to be inquired into. The right hon. gentleman had stated that no order had been given by the treasury, but the expense incurred would of course be paid out of the civil list; and according to an act of parliament, no expense exceeding 1000*l*. could be incurred, without an estimate being first made out and sanctioned by the treasury. He hoped, therefore, his hon. friend would move for papers, to show whether such estimate had been prepared, and what correspondence had taken place between the board of works and the treasury upon the subject.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* replied, that he had not asserted that no order was issued by the treasury, but that he was not aware of any one having been issued. He should, indeed, rather imagine, from the correctness of proceeding always observed by the person at the head of the board of works, that such an authority had been duly obtained by him.

Mr. *Addington* begged to disclaim all idea of casting any imputation upon the board of works. He merely stated what he knew of the transaction, in consequence of what had fallen from his hon. friend.

Here the conversation closed, it being understood that Mr. Bankes would, on a future occasion, move for papers upon the subject.

OFFENDERS' TRANSPORTATION BILL.] On the motion for the second reading of the Bill to amend several Laws relative to the Transportation of Offenders,

Mr. *Bennet* said, it was not his intention to oppose the second reading of this bill, or to throw any obstructions in the way of its progress at present. When the bill came into a committee, however, he should take an opportunity of moving the insertion of the words "two years," instead of "five years," meaning to limit the duration of the bill to the smaller period. On this occasion he would, with the permission of the House, offer some remarks. He believed this was a subject with which the House was very little acquainted—he meant the state of our settlement at Botany Bay. He did not mean to carry the House back to the period when the original settlement was founded. It was sufficient for him to observe, that for many years the expense of the colony in New South Wales had been extremely burthensome on this country. It was now high time that parliament should endeavour to control this expense, and inquire how far its continuance was consistent with the interests of the kingdom. Previous to 1810, the annual expense of the colony had amounted to 100,000*l.*, but in the year 1810 itself, the estimate of expenses was taken at 175,000*l.* although it was allowed that the number of convicts had diminished one-third. He had not yet seen the report of the expenses of the years 1811 and 1812, but in all probability they had been much greater. From 1810 to 1812, he understood the number of persons sent to Botany Bay amounted to 600—and from 1812 to 1815 those sent amounted to no less than 2378, making altogether a total of 3000 persons; and he would beg the House to recollect that those individuals were not sent out at less than an expense of 100*l.* per man. Taking, therefore, the estimate of 1810, at 175,000*l.* for 2000 convicts which were then in the colony, we now had to provide for 5000, an expense so enormous, that at least it should not be incurred unless under circumstances of peculiar advantage to the country. Now he would ask, what those advantages were? It had been the opinion of all writers upon this subject, that to render punishment good as an example, its effect should be apparent; but the nature of the punishment of transportation had long since lost all its terror, and the fact was, that at this instant there were hundreds of candidates on board the hulks to be sent to Botany Bay. When the practice formerly existed of transporting felons to America, these individuals became mixed with a large population, and became embodied with them, and soon imbibed their industrious habits—but it was reserved for the British parliament to assemble together in one spot three or four thousand felons, for the propagation of the most atrocious crimes. The reformation of the convicts was utterly impossible, because they formed a society exclusively and wholly composed of criminals. How, then, was their reformation to be effected? It was not like the case of New Spain, where a criminal was dropped into a society, consisting of active, industrious, and well-disposed members, where he was lost, as it were, in the mass of correct morals surrounding him, and where he gradually became absorbed in the general system. At Botany Bay, all were equally depraved, and no one, therefore, could set the example to another. Such was the monstrous inconsistency of those who originated the plan, and of the legislature which sanctioned it. He understood that the most vicious profligacy prevailed throughout that colony, and that the whip and the gallows were incessantly employed. He spoke only according to the accounts which had been laid before parliament in 1810. Of the last five years he could know nothing, for no additional information had been presented. But what was the report made by governor Philips? From his account it appeared that the most melancholy vice and immorality prevailed, and that they were not confined merely to the transported felons. The free women settlers in that colony were just as debased and profligate as the convict women. Under all the circumstances of the case, he trusted that parliament or the government would take the subject into its consideration, and provide some remedies for the evils which he had touched upon. It was with this object that he should propose the insertion of two years instead of five, when the bill went into the committee.

Mr. *Goulburn* said, he would shortly allude to two circumstances on which the last speaker had dwelt at considerable length; namely, the depravity of morals in that colony and the improvement which had been made in the course of the last five years, of which the hon. gentleman seemed not fully aware. The crimes committed in the early years of that colony must necessarily have been great in number; yet it was somewhat satisfactory to learn, from recent intelligence, that morals had been considerably ameliorated, and the catalogue of crimes comparatively small. Some better regulations had been adopted for the prevention of crime and the encouragement of virtuous habits. He felt it his duty to state that the hon. gentleman seemed to be in error respecting the number of punishments, and particularly of executions. Corporal punishments were far from being so frequent as he believed. When the convicts were landed they were consigned partly to families who had settled there, and partly to government. Those who were consigned to families had generally been reformed, and, by the propriety of their conduct, shown the sincerity of their repentance for their former offences. Many of them had been chosen to fill situations of respectability, many of them had returned to this country, and were now, by good conduct, doing honour to the society which they had once disgraced. Those who were consigned to government service were worked in gangs, and for the sake of good order it was sometimes necessary to punish some. Yet so far was this punishment from being inflicted by the overseer, that it could not be done unless by order of a magistrate, and even then only twenty-five lashes were awarded. By reading the reports of the two last years, it would be found that executions were also rare. In that period the whole number condemned to die was twenty, and of these only six had suffered death, the majority of whom were convicted of murder. He would ask the House if this did not, in a great measure, prove the truth of what he was saying? He begged the House would not form a rash opinion respecting the degeneracy of the colony. If they read the returns of the last two years, they would find the number of crimes decreased, that marriages had become frequent, and that now, on good grounds, every hope might be entertained of the progressive amelioration of the colony.

Mr. *Lockhart* certainly thought transportation was far from being so lenient a mode of punishment as some people imagined. It certainly, in respect to reformation, was infinitely superior to a prison, as there very little chance of reformation was to be had. Two modes might be suggested for diminishing the number of punishments. The first was the education of the children of poor parents. And here he was glad to observe the spirited exertions so happily making by all classes for this interesting object. It was only by enlightening the ignorant that we had any rational hopes of reclaiming the vicious. The other mode was that of appointing a permanent tribunal in London for the trial of minor offences (he meant by these every crime short of murder, forgery, or such aggravated breaches of the law) which he had no doubt would have a better effect than the mode at present, of waiting from one sessions to another. The terror of immediate punishment might in all probability diminish the catalogue of crimes, but the former mode he had proposed was the better calculated to establish virtuous principles.

Mr. *Holford* could not concur with the principles of this bill, as he considered it by no means fitted to produce the effects intended. The improvements which the bill of last year had professed to introduce were really nothing at all, as they consisted only in a name being given to the person who had the superintendance of the colony. Nor did he perceive that mighty improvement in morals of which an hon. member had spoken so highly. There were two points to which he particularly called the attention of the House. The first was the propriety of separating the convicts. In the report of the committee of 1812, a plan had been presented to the House for subdividing the hulks into small divisions, and one had actually been fitted up in that state. He was sorry now to see that plan abandoned, as from the intermixture of the convicts much danger might be apprehended. In the hulks it was well known there were persons of all classes, young and old, some for seven years, some for fourteen, and some waiting to be carried to a distant country for life. Varied as the punishments thus were in proportion to their crimes, it was evident their hardihood must be more or less varied also. It was therefore requisite that a proper distinction should be made between them. The divisions he understood were now to be reduced to six or seven, on pretence of of there being a want of air. He was at Sheerness in June last, and went down to one of the hulks at nine and at twelve o'clock, midnight, but he saw no reason to apprehend any danger from this. In the divisions now proposed, sixty or seventy men would be confined together in one place, the baneful consequences of which were too obvious to require being mentioned. The second point he wished the House to attend to was, the necessity of keeping a careful account of the earnings of the convicts. The act of parliament required officers to keep a particular account of this, but somehow or other it was totally neglected. There was, indeed, an account given, but it was far from being so minute or accurate as he wished it to be, as it merely gave the average of labour performed by the whole, without specifying the particular hulk in which the person belonged, and this account even in its defective state was not checked by the proper person who should do it. Now, what he wished to be done was, that a particular account should be kept of the earnings of each vessel, that thus the public might know which were or were not useful. The House were now told that the convicts were to be removed from Cumberland Fort, in consequence of the work at that place being done. Why, the very same thing was told in 1812, yet the convicts were there still. From the average he had taken of the accounts, he found that at Woolwich the labour of the convicts was equal to paid labour, and at Sheerness two-thirds of paid labour. He could not see that difficulty which some supposed in keeping accounts. With respect to transportation, it was evidently improper to carry persons to Botany Bay who had been adjudged to seven years transportation, as probably the half of their time was over before they could be removed, and it was very hard on the unhappy individual to leave him at the expiry of his servitude in that colony. Hence he approved of penitentiary houses and of hulks, but he would wish the House to adopt some salutary regulations in proportion to their importance.

Mr. *Addington* observed, that the hon. gentleman opposite seemed to think the system of transportation, as it was now acted upon, radically bad; he had better, then, turn his undivided attention to the subject with a view to propose a substitute for it. It had been his (Mr. Addington's) intention to introduce a bill which would consolidate the acts in force relative to this subject, but he had found so many difficulties to encounter, that he was for the moment compelled to desist; he did not, however, ultimately despair of effecting his object. As to the arrangement of the prison-ships, to which his hon. friend had alluded, he assured the House that every attention had been paid to the subject. With respect to the excellent report on the state of the prisons, many of the alterations suggested in it had been adopted, and others were under consideration. His hon. friend had adverted to the model of a prison-ship, which had been exhibited to the board of admiralty, of which he seemed to approve. Now, according to that plan, the convicts would be divided into 40 classes, and very considerable expense and much inconvenience would be created. At present, the convicts on board each of the prison-ships were formed into seven classes. The worst description were placed in the class No. 1, those who were better, in No. 2, and so on, progressively, till they came to No. 7, which contained the best conducted of the prisoners, and the chaplain reported, from time to time, those who, from their improvement in morals, were most worthy of the royal clemency: from this regulation very great benefit had resulted. The hon. gentleman inquired, whether any plan had been devised for affording employment to the convicts? On that point, he was happy to state, that in the course of a very short time sufficient employment would be found for the whole of them. It was difficult to keep an account of their earnings, but measures would be taken to secure as correct an account as possible.

The Bill was then read a second time.

REDUCED ARMY ESTIMATES.] The order of the day was read for going into a committee of supply, for the purpose of taking into consideration the Reduced Army Estimates. On the question, that the Speaker do leave the chair,

Mr. *Warre* rose and said, he would avail himself of the present opportunity to make a few observations on the reduced estimates. He would first call the attention of the House to the charge for staff and hospital officers, on foreign stations;

and contrast the present expenditure with that of former periods. If the figures he should produce were correct, and if the papers laid on their table were accurate, then, he thought, that, by the comparison, he should be able to make out such a case, as would call upon the House not to let those estimates be referred to the committee at all. A paper had been placed on their table, which gave an account of the general and staff-officers, serving on foreign stations, on the 25th of Dec. 1792—and on the 25th Dec. 1802—specifying their rank, situation, and pay.—The total charge (according to this document) for staff officers, &c. on foreign stations, in 1792, was 17,000*l.*; in 1802, it was 19,500*l.*, being an increase, from 1792, to 1802, of only 2,500*l.* The pay of general and staff-officers, and those serving in hospitals, on foreign stations, was precisely the same, in 1792, as it was at the present moment. Now, having stated this, he would come very shortly to what the charges were, in the present day, for the same service. In 1802, as he had before observed, the charge for general and staff-officers amounted to 19,500*l.*—it was, in the original estimates, for 1816, 163,000*l.*; and, after making the proposed reduction, it would still be 123,000*l.* On this statement, he would ask the House, were they ready to recognise, in a period of profound peace, a system by which six times more was demanded, for this particular service, than was called for at the peace of Amiens? [Hear, hear!] Our colonial possessions, he knew, were increased—he would say doubled. He would say, therefore, let the charge be doubled. But he could not see with what propriety, or on what principle, ministers could now ask for 123,000*l.* to defray the charge of a service, which, in 1802, stood the country in 19,500*l.* He did not intend to make a regular motion on this point, but he thought the House should refuse going into the committee, until a proper explanation (which he looked upon as impossible) was given by the noble lord. If such an explanation were not entered into, he trusted the estimates would be referred back for further revision. He would now enter into a more minute detail, and state the alterations which, he conceived, ought to be made in the expenditure, under this particular item:—In 1802, the whole charge for general and staff-officers, in the Mediterranean, chiefly confined to Gibraltar, was 1,385*l.*; having added Malta and the Ionian islands to our possessions, he would triple the charge, which would give 4,149*l.*; in 1802, the expenses for the same service, in North America, was 6,339*l.*; as the frontier was very much increased, and rumours of danger were abroad, he would now allow twice that sum, for the service, being 12,778*l.*; going to the East Indies, he would allow for the Cape, the Mauritius, and the island of Ceylon, the same sum which, in 1802, was paid for the staff at Gibraltar, viz. 1,383*l.*; which gave a total for those three places of 4,149*l.* In 1802, the staff-service, in the West Indies, including Jamaica, cost 11,712*l.*; as several islands were added to our possessions, he would double that sum, being 23,424*l.*; making an aggregate on the scale he produced, of 44,400*l.*; this, deducted from the sum now called for, of 123,000*l.*, would make a difference to the public, of 78,600*l.*; from this latter sum, let there be deducted, for St. Helena, Goree, and Senegal (not that he supposed so large an expense was necessary, but for the sake of round numbers) 8,600*l.*, and there would still remain for the general and staff-officers serving on foreign stations, according to the present estimate, the sum of 70,000*l.* for which he could by no means account. It seemed to him to be perfectly unnecessary. He should now advert to the staff establishment at the horse-guards. He had taken the liberty of comparing that single item with the expenditure, in the same department, in 1813, when the war was conducted on a most extensive scale—this country having America on her shoulders as well as her European enemies. How then did the case stand? In 1813, the charge for the staff at the horse guards was 17,226*l.*; at present, even on the reduced estimate, it was 16,427*l.* Thus, in 1816, when the army was considerably diminished, and all the business connected with the military department was lessened, a saving had been effected of 799*l.*!! Unless the noble lord could give some cogent reasons for such lavish expenditure, he conceived it would be the duty of the House to refuse considering the estimates in a committee.

Lord *Palmerston* thought the observations of the hon. gentleman would have been better timed in the committee, when the details came to be discussed. He would put the issue of the question, not on a comparison of the amount of the charge for the staff in former times, but on this simple point, whether the staff now proposed exceeded or not the necessities of the case? The papers before the House contained only the reductions which had taken, or were to take place, in general officers. The reason of that was plain; for without having had a communication with the officers commanding on foreign stations, it would have been mere delusion to pretend to state what reductions in adjutants general, quarter masters general, &c. were likely to be effected. A communication had been made to those commanders, in which they had been desired to turn their attention to that subject, and to assign reasons for the suppression or continuance of certain appointments. Without such information, it would be impossible, at home, to fix what reductions should take place in distant stations. If the hon. gentleman compared the estimates of former years with those on the table, he would see, that the chief difference was occasioned by the absence of all the minor items to which he had alluded. In 1792 there were only three head surgeons in the hospitals in the West Indies. Would it be proper to trust the health of the present force to so small a number? It must not be forgotten, that with the increase of colonies and of garrisons, the number of staff officers must be augmented. As to the staff officers at home, the office of the commander in chief should be considered as a public department. He trusted that he would be able in the committee to justify the charge proposed.

Mr. *Tierney* did not know whether this was a proper or an improper time for the discussion of this matter; but he was sure the noble lord had given no answer whatever to the questions that had been put to him. His hon. friend could not comprehend why so enormous an increase should take place on the foreign staff: he admitted that reductions had taken place in some instances, but none in the branch which had called forth his inquiries. No answer whatever had been given, and he believed none could be given. Gentlemen on the ministerial side always acted from the most conscientious motives; they had carried economy to the utmost point of saving; yet discussion had effected some savings that they never seemed to have contemplated at first; and he would venture to say, that the more we discussed the more we should save. He gave them credit for the reductions they had already consented to, for he believed they had cost them much debate, and a long struggle among themselves. Could any body believe that the estimates had in some instances trebled since 1802, though we had no longer an enemy, or the appearance of an enemy? On a broad principle, the argument of his hon. friend was unanswerable. If the House wished to establish any thing satisfactory to the country, they would immediately enter into a select committee, to see in earnest what could be done. The noble lord had said, he should refer to the general officers abroad; but could any thing be more unsatisfactory than this?—as if the generals could feel any propensity to reduce a part of their own dependents! He had no wish to take from the salary of the duke of York; that should, if it were possible, be continued, if not for the duties of the station, at least as a fair compliment to his royal highness for the zeal and ability with which, during the war, he had conducted the business of his department. But what had this to do with the commander-in-chief's staff? or what to do with that which the noble lord with great gravity called a department of government? There ought to be a total abolition of all the rest, except the duke's salary. How was the business carried on in former times? And why (to come to the old battle of a preceding evening) was there any necessity for this third secretary? It was a scandalous waste of the public money, and a complete mockery to talk of economy, under such a lavish expenditure. He did not accuse ministers of any corrupt motive; if he thought them guilty of that, he should proceed in another way; but he did accuse them of a perfect indifference to saving. They carried on war just as their pleasure led them: any sums, however great, they asked for and obtained; and if any gentleman like himself who wished to check this career of extravagance and ruin, objected to the measures that were pursued, he was immediately accused of a friendship for Buonaparté, of jacobin principles, or modern philosophy, and treated with scorn and derision, while ministers had only to ask and have. But times were sadly altered now: and the only question was, how to make both ends meet. He gave ministers credit for the little saving they had permitted; it was more than he expected: but still he must view it with a jealous eye, because, admitting the full extent of it, we were three times worse off than in any former peace. He saw that the noble lord opposite was going to say something in answer to what he had taken the liberty of stating. He therefore would stop to afford him the opportunity, and he hoped his speech now would be more satisfactory than his speeches in general were.

Lord *Castlereagh* said, he was forced to repeat his former caution against considering the present estimates as estimates for any longer period than the year for which they were drawn up. Had the right hon. gentleman who spoke last employed his excellent understanding upon a deliberate consideration of the subject, and given due weight to what had been so often stated by ministers, he would have been convinced of this, and would have refrained from making some of the general observations in which he indulged. The right hon. gentleman took credit to himself, in the opposition he had excited for the reduction in the estimates that had already taken place. That reduction, he was willing to allow, was considerable; and a farther reduction might be anticipated, although to what amount could not yet be determined. When the original estimates were first presented, it had been impossible to fix upon any lower amount than was done. The statements that government now presented were formed upon the anticipation of a year to come, the broken period of the current year constituting a part of it. The hon. gentlemen opposite might take credit to themselves for compelling a review of them, and he did not wish to deprive them of their self-gratulations on the subject: but he would declare that the same reduction would have taken place, though they had given him their entire acquiescence without objection or inquiry. He entirely concurred in the opinion expressed by his noble friend near him (lord Palmerston) that all the reductions that might be effected in the staff on foreign stations could not be known till the general officers commanding on those stations should be consulted, nor did he see that it was liable to the objection made to it by the right hon. gentleman. How could it be known, but from officers on the spot, what number of assistants they would require, or what number the exigencies of their particular situation demanded? The right hon. gentleman brought a sweeping objection to the present government and staff appointments of the army, by asking why it was to stand on a different footing now than it did formerly. The office of commander-in-chief and the staff at head-quarters, the office of secretary at war, and that filled by his noble friend (lord Palmerston), were all considered by him as existing for the command of the army. The office of secretary at war was now abolished, and the department of third secretary of state was considered as a colonial department. The secretary at war, it was well known, had nothing more to do with the discipline and regulation of the army than any member of the House. Would the right hon. gentleman wish the office of commander-in-chief to be abolished too? This office was now more necessary than ever, and the advantages that had arisen from it to our army were incalculable. Nothing had changed so much as the character and discipline of our military force within the short period that had passed since 1792. Before that time, a British army, assembled under the same general, had no more uniformity of movements, of discipline, and appearance in its various regiments, than one composed of the troops of different sovereign states. Let any one consider what was its present state—the facility with which it could perform all its operations in concert—the perfect uniformity of tactics that it possessed—and he would acknowledge how much had been done, and how necessary it was to continue an establishment on which this state of things depended. The right hon. gentleman, he was sure, would not, upon mature reflection, wish it to be abolished, even although it was not filled by that high character to whom the nation and the army were under so many obligations. He would see the impropriety of asserting that these were departments merely belonging to war, after what had been said to-night and on a former occasion. The noble lord said, he could not see the reasonableness of the objections that the right hon. gentleman had to go into a committee. He had expressed an opinion that, in a committee of supply, the only questions that could be agitated were about the sums of money to be voted for particular purposes, and that the number or the quality of the subjects for which that supply was required could not be altered or modified. The right hon. gentleman might easily see the fallacy implied in this opinion. A particular sum might be proposed to be struck off, and then, of course, that head of service must be reduced. He did not doubt but that, when the committee was formed, the gentlemen opposite would be sensible that they could follow this course, and that they would then easily see what they now thought so difficult to be conceived. The committee was, indeed, the only place where the subject could be minutely discussed, and where the propriety of the estimates, item by item, could be judged of. The *primâ facie* objection of the hon. gentleman who opened the debate, founded on the alarming difference between the staff in the present estimates, and that of 1792 and 1802, would be reduced in the imagination of the House, if they compared the circumstances of those two periods with those of the present time. There was a great difference between our colonial establishments as they existed then and now. We had now nearly thirty colonies; and taking the expenses of the staff at 100,000*l.*, there would not remain much more than 3,000*l.* He wished, in conclusion, particularly to impress upon the House that the present estimates were not intended to express the extent of our permanent establishments, but merely the establishment of the present year, and that as soon as communications had been had with the officers on foreign stations, they would be very considerably altered.

General *Gascoyne* said, he was led to believe that the reduction was carried too far already [Hear, hear!]. He did not mean to apply this expression to our establishments in general, but only to a particular instance. He alluded to Jamaica, where there was only to be a commander of the forces, with no other general officer. He was of opinion that one general officer was insufficient for a station where there were between 3 and 4,000 men of a garrison, besides 4 or 5,000 militia, a great proportion of the troops being negroes; who might require a vigilant superintendance. He did not know the major-general who enjoyed that appointment; but he might be, from his rank in the army, an officer who had not seen service. With regard to the horse-guards, he gave it as his opinion, that the directions and command of the army could not be placed in better hands than in those of the illustrious person at the head of that department. He believed that neither the right hon. gentleman near him (Mr. Tierney) nor any other member of the House wished the direction of the army to be taken from that royal personage, and placed more immediately under the influence of government. In the hands of his royal highness it was placed at a distance from political interests, and could not, with probability, be made an engine for influencing the legislature. He believed there never was a time in any of the former periods of our history, when there was less connexion between the government and the army than at present.

Mr. *Tierney* was surprised at the unconstitutional doctrine stated by the hon. general, if he understood him right; and begged leave to ask him if he considered the army as independent of the government, and removed from the influence and direction of responsible ministers [Hear, hear!].

General *Gascoyne* repeated his former statement, that the army under the command of the royal duke was less liable to be used as a means of political influence than if it were under an officer, who, depending more upon ministers might be more disposed to adopt their partialities, and to support their measures.

Mr. *Tierney* protested that he had the utmost respect for his royal highness the duke of York, from whom the army had derived the greatest benefit, but, in a constitutional point of view, he could never consent to recognize the doctrine of the hon. general.

General *Gascoyne* said, the right hon. gentleman must know, that what he meant was, that there was in the present case less to be apprehended of influence in that House, arising from the patronage of the army.

Mr. *Tierney* declared, that he should be ten times more jealous of that influence, when the army was commanded by one of the royal family, than when it was under the command of his Majesty's ministers.

Mr. *Bennet* compared the expense of the office of commander in chief in 1807, with its present expense. In 1807, with an army of 260,000 men, the expense was 7,638*l.* Now, with an army of 149,000 men the expense was 16,295*l.*—Whence did the necessity for this increase arise? The noble lord had talked of the British troops of former times, as if they had been trained bands, forgetting the victories of Blenheim, Fontenoy, &c. which had been so gloriously achieved by them. Adverting to the other estimates, the hon. gentleman particularly dwelt on that for the royal waggon train. In the last year above 2000 horses had been bought for this service, at an expense of 66,965*l.* It was natural to suppose that some of these horses would be re-sold as unnecessary, and so they had been. The number was three, and the public benefitted by the sale in the enormous sum of 15 guineas! The hon. gentleman then referred to the half pay, and complained in the name of the officers who had been reduced in 1802 and 1803, that they had not received the allowances to which they were, in his opinion, entitled by the augmentation that had taken place in 1814.

Lord *Castlereagh* explained by saying, that he alluded only to a want of uniformity in the discipline of the regiments that composed our army formerly, and by no means wished to deny its efficiency.

The House then resolved itself into the committee.

Lord *Palmerston*, in reply to what the hon. gentleman had mentioned respecting the waggon train, stated, that the duke of Wellington never would go into the field without having a large corps of that description with him. It was applied to the service of hospitals, and after the battle of Waterloo had been employed for sixty hours in carrying off the wounded, by which means many valuable lives had been saved. Its numbers not being deemed sufficient previous to the commencement of the campaign, the horses in question had been purchased to augment it. There were now five troops with the duke of Wellington, and the rest were at home, employed in transporting the sick, and in the military college. As to the wish expressed by the hon. gentleman to extend the increase in the half-pay to all officers, it was an additional instance, that whilst all were looking to retrenchment, scarcely an individual could refrain from proposing some point of augmentation. The increase in the half-pay had, at the time it was granted, been limited to those who had been, or were to be, reduced in 1814, and to those who had been obliged to leave the service since 1793, on account of wounds and infirmities. Those who had voluntarily quitted the army were not thought entitled to that increase, because if they had chosen to retire from the service, it was not fair they should be as well rewarded as those whom wounds or reduction had alone compelled to withdraw. As to the system of retrenchment adopted by ministers for the present year, it went as far as it was possible at this period. On the home staff, there would be only one major-general in North Britain, where there used to be two. There would be another for the northern parts of the kingdom; one at Portsmouth, one at Plymouth, one in Kent; and in Guernsey and Jersey there would be two majors general instead of lieutenants general. In North America there would be one commander of the forces; in Canada two majors general; in Nova Scotia two general officers. In the Windward and Leeward islands the staff would be composed of one commander of the forces and four majors general, instead of lieutenants general. At Jamaica there would be only one major general. It was intended to remove the major general from Gibraltar, and to place the general on whom the command would devolve, on civil, instead of staff pay. At Malta there would be one lieutenant general, and in the Ionian islands two majors general. There would be besides a commander in chief for Malta and the Ionian islands, with power to reside in either of those places. There would be at the Cape of Good Hope, one major general, the same at the Mauritius, and at Ceylon the officer in command would only receive the civil pay of governor. He concluded by moving "That a sum, not exceeding 277,885*l.* 10*s.* 1*d.* be granted to his majesty, for defraying the charge of general and staff officers and officers of the hospitals serving with his majesty's forces, and the charge of his majesty's garrisons, from the 25th day of December 1815 to the 24th day of December 1816, both inclusive, being 366 days."

Mr. *Tierney* was utterly unable to discover why a staff so much larger than any former staff was now necessary. If, therefore, he declined arguing the question, it was not because he was convinced of the expediency of the proposition.

Mr. *Wynn* was of opinion, that the establishment of an adjutant and quarter-master general, and their respective deputy assistants at Ceylon, was far greater than the proportion of the military force stationed there required. In St. Helena, with a garrison of not more than 1400 men, what necessity was there for a lieutenant general, a brigadier general, their aid-de-camps, secretary, &c.? This species of force was quite too much, even though they had such a person as Buonaparté to look after. He observed, that there were two officers in the personal staff of the commander in chief, on which he could not help commenting—the chaplain and the surgeon. With all due respect he must say, that neither the body nor the soul of his royal highness required these attendants. In his relation to the army he had the benefit of the physician general and the chaplain general; and as a member of the royal family, he enjoyed 38,000*l.* a year for his household, in the establishment of which he would of course have a chaplain and a surgeon.

Lord *Palmerston* replied, that this part of the staff applied to the duke of york, not as commander in chief, but as a field marshal. The staff of quarter-master and adjutant-general, became necessary at Ceylon, to superintend the formation of the great road which was to connect both our settlements in that quarter. Internal improvements in the Mauritius would give equal employment there. The medical staff in the West Indies, and other unwholesome climates, could not well be reduced, from the frequency of the contagious disorders to which they were exposed.

Mr. *Abercrombie* animadverted upon the establishment at St. Helena, and the useless waste of public money in maintaining forts, such as Augusta and St. George, in Scotland, which were of no possible use, but served only for the extension of government patronage.

Lord *Palmerston* said, that as to St. Helena, if the necessity were admitted of keeping in safe custody the individual who was there confined, it was evident that a trust of that nature required the employment of a general officer of rank; and it followed that the risk of his life should be also considered, and that somebody should be there as second in command to replace the principal in the event of any unforeseen casualty.

Mr. *Ponsonby* wished to know what was the entire expense incurred by this country in guarding the person of Buonaparté. The estimates before the committee threw no light on this point. What, he asked, was the total cost of the naval, military, and civil arrangements touching the detention of this person at St. Helena?

Lord *Castlereagh* replied, that he was at that moment unprepared to give the information which the right hon. gentleman solicited. He might, however, make a motion on the subject.

Mr. *Wynn* asked, whether the salary of the governor of St. Helena was included in the estimates, and whether the salaries of the two general officers accompanying him were to be found among the papers?

Lord *Castlereagh* said, the House would feel that the establishment at St. Helena stood on quite a different policy from that of any other place. It involved a great political trust, and a question of good faith with the other powers of Europe. Nothing could be more fatal than the calamity of the escape of the person who was our prisoner. There could not be less than two general officers to superintend his custody. On the subject of expense, as connected with this arrangement, he was at that instant unprepared to go into particulars. But the public would certainly have but to meet the excess of the expense between the former and the present expense of the island. The governor was to receive no allowances, he was merely to have his fixed pay.

Mr. *Tierney* said, that if this country was only to have a proportion of the benefit of Buonaparté's detention, it was rather hard she should have to bear the whole expense.

Lord *Castlereagh* repeated what he had stated on a former night, namely, that the allied powers would have most readily released us from the charge of detaining Buonaparté, had we consigned him to their custody—a transfer to which, after his surrender to us, it was impossible we could consent.

Mr. *Tierney* said, that this might be a good reason why the allies would not pay any portion of this expense, but he could not see any reason why France should not pay her share of it. If France consented to pay the charge of a large army in her territory to keep down Buonaparté's system, why not afford a little to assist in keeping out the individual who was the life and soul of that system. As matters stood, a great hardship was imposed on England.

Lord *Castlereagh* could not well see with what grace we could call on France to pay a part of our own arrangement, as she was anxious to take the whole charge of it upon herself, if we resigned Buonaparté into her hands for safe custody.

Mr. *Ponsonby* said, that as there was a common interest in the security of Buonaparté, so there should be a community of expense. It was said, indeed, that we had no right to call upon the allies to bear a proportion, because they were anxious to take the weight from our shoulders and place it upon their own, but that we could not in generosity accede to this proposition. But the noble lord should have said to the ministers of Russia, Prussia, and Austria, when they made it, "You are relieved from the presence of this man, but you are without a place of sufficient security for his full and complete detention. We have that place in the island of St. Helena, and we will appropriate it accordingly; but as the advantage is common, so must be the expense." Those powers could not have had the smallest objection to such an offer. As to France, why should she not pay a share? But really this was one of the many lavish ways in which British treasure was squandered. When payment was to be arranged, nobody dreamt of being a party to it but England, and according to the trite but vulgar phrase, "whoever gained the advantage, John Bull paid the expense."

Lord *Castlereagh* said, that one of the great objections of some gentlemen to the peace with France was, the enormous sum levied upon her; and now it was complained, that we had not imposed a further sum upon them for the expense of Buonaparté's detention.

Mr. *Ponsonby* said, that he was not one of the persons who objected to the pecuniary part of the French treaty.

Mr. *Wynn* said, that as the allies were sending out commissioners to St. Helena to exercise an equal right of possession with us to the custody of Buonaparté, nothing could be more fair than that they should participate in the expense. France, above all, had a right to pay some share; for by the support which she had given to the ambition of the individual, she had made herself the great instrument of inflicting the ills under which Europe had so long groaned.

Mr. *Abercrombie* intimated, that if the expenditure of the forts in Scotland was not relinquished in the next estimates, he would call the attention of the House to the subject of a useless expenditure, which only existed for purposes of government patronage. If the ministers had had to contend with the agricultural and commercial distresses, they were determined not to have to contend with those of the military, by keeping open a few places for that branch of the community.

Mr. *Hammersley* asked, whether any proposition had been submitted to the allies on the subject of Buonaparté's expense?

Lord *Castlereagh* said, that it would have been inconsistent with the dignity of this country to require from other powers the concession of terms, by which they must have necessarily become a party to our policy at St. Helena, and, of course, open to consultation on all occasions before we could send a ship out to that island.

Lord *Palmerston*, on the subject of the forts in Scotland, observed, that they formed a convenient retreat for disabled officers, who might deserve well of their country.

Mr. *Abercrombie* said, that one of the complaints which the noble lord opposite had urged against Mr. Windham's military plan, was the expense which it would entail upon the country; he could now, however, use the same argument when it suited his own purpose.

Mr. *Ponsonby* ridiculed the argument, that the dignity of the country was at all concerned in the mode of paying the expense of Buonaparté.

Mr. *Peel* said, that it was usual, in alliances, for each party to bear the expense of its own prisoners.

Mr. *Ponsonby* replied, that this might be the case in ordinary cases, but not in such as the present.

Mr. *Wynn* concurred in this opinion. He asked, how the staff happened to amount to 10,000*l.* now, more than it did in 1802?

Mr. *Peel* defended this part of the establishment, observing, that there was nothing in which the Irish government was less concerned. The reduction that had been made proceeded from the commander in chief, and the government of Ireland actually protested against it, as being too great. It was only proposed to retain one lieutenant-general and ten major-generals. The hon. gentleman must be aware that it was most material that there should be a sufficient number of major-generals, from the important duties they had to perform. When application was made to the civil power, these officers had to report to the government their opinion, from which it was judged, whether there was a necessity for sending to any quarter an additional military force. It was proposed to retain also seven assistant adjutant-generals. The right hon. gentleman then stated, that in the first estimates, which were prepared in November, there was a mistake, by omitting to insert the reductions which were at that time intended to be made.

The resolution was agreed to.

Lord *Palmerston* next moved, "That the sum of 110,113*l.* 8*s.* 2*d.* be granted for defraying the charges of the Volunteer

Corps of Great Britain and Ireland, for the year 1810." The noble lord, in proposing this resolution, stated, that the allowance of 4*l.* per man for clothing, &c. would be now reduced one-half. A reduction had already taken place in the brigade majors on the Irish department, to the amount of 6 or 7,000*l.*

Mr. *Wynn* paid a ready tribute to the services of this force, and feared that an allowance of 2*l.* per man was not sufficient.

Mr. *Addington* concurred in the praises bestowed on the volunteer force by the hon. member. There was no instance in which they had not obeyed with alacrity the orders of the magistracy, and always with success, in suppressing riots and disturbances; never had a drop of British blood been shed by them in the performance of that duty.

Sir *J. C. Hippisley* also spoke of the alacrity which the volunteers ever manifested, in preserving the peace and tranquillity of the country; he only regretted that they should be so much reduced. He observed, that the regular troopers stood the country in 65*l.* a man, and, consequently, that a regular force of an amount equal to the volunteers would be attended with an expense of 1,400,000*l.* This was a great saving. He therefore hoped it was not the intention of his majesty's government further to reduce this force, but that they would consider it a part of the permanent establishment of the country.

Lord *Palmerston* replied, that it was impossible either for his majesty's government, or for the committee, to pledge themselves to any thing beyond the vote for the present year; but he could inform the hon. baronet, that ministers were fully sensible of the valuable services of the volunteers corps, and would be always happy to render them available.

Mr. *Wynn* thought, that as the advantage of holding a force of that description embodied, appeared so readily acknowledged, some greater inducement than they enjoyed at present should be held out to the individuals composing it.

Mr. *Robinson* said, that it was not intended to call out the volunteer corps as many days in the year as formerly, and in consequence of the reduced service, he thought 2*l.* a man an ample allowance. Some of those corps had funds of their own, and all were exempt from the horse tax. With respect to the necessity of holding out a greater inducement to them, he felt that there could be none greater than the zeal and public spirit by which those corps had been ever influenced.

Mr. *Wynn* said, that when those corps were called out, they were necessarily subject to greater expense than when living at home. He meant to make no motion on the subject, but suggested that the allowance should be raised to 3*l.*

Sir *J. C. Hippisley* concurred in all that had been said by the hon. gentleman, in thinking that many of those corps were not able to support themselves without some assistance from government. He acknowledged that they had required no greater inducement during the war than their zeal and public spirit, but that inducement had been considerably weakened since the return of peace.

The resolution was agreed to.

Lord *Palmerston* then rose to propose a vote for the pay of the local militia. With regard to that force, it was intended to relieve the public from the expense attending it without destroying its organization. The plan was, to discontinue the pay of the permanent part of the force, such as the serjeants, drummers, and corporals, and also of the quarter-masters; to put the adjutants on the retired pay, to place the arms under the care of the ordnance, and having thus got rid of the expense, to permit the officers to retain their commissions, and to suffer the men to serve out their regular period. This reduction would, however, take some time to complete; he should, therefore, for the present year move, "That there be granted to his majesty a sum not exceeding 90,000*l.* to defray the expenses of the local militia."—This resolution was agreed to.

NAVY ESTIMATES.] The report of the Navy Estimates was brought up. On account of the absence of several members belonging to the naval service, who had left the House on an understanding, that the ordnance estimates were to precede the navy estimates, it was, after considerable discussion, agreed, that the consideration of certain resolutions should be postponed to a future day.

Admiral *Markham*, adverting to the proposed continuance of a resident commissioner of the navy at Woolwich, observed, that it would appear much more reasonable to make such an appointment for some dock-yard at a great distance from London, for Milford, for instance, than for a place so contiguous as Woolwich and Deptford, which might be very conveniently superintended by the navy board, or the admiralty.

Sir *Joseph Yorke* defended the appointment at Woolwich.

Admiral *Markham* threw out, for the consideration of the admiralty, the propriety of making some provision for the more regular payment of naval officers on foreign stations, and also for improving the condition of midshipmen.

Admiral *Hope* observed, that the admiralty felt the best disposition to do every thing practicable for the benefit of all classes in the navy, as well warrant-officers as midshipmen, and that this disposition was manifest from the improvements which had already taken place. It was indeed notorious that the condition of the navy had been very materially improved of late years.

Mr. *Forbes* seconded the recommendation of admiral Markham, and urged the justice of a new arrangement with respect to pensions.

Sir *G. Warrender* suggested the propriety of postponing the consideration of the point alluded to by the last speaker, until the question of pensions should be brought before the House.

Mr. *Tierney* thought that some better provision should be made for surgeons and surgeons' mates in the navy, who were not so well rewarded as the surgeons in the army.

Mr. *Croker* observed, that in point of fact, the surgeons of the navy were generally much better off than those of the army.

Mr. *Brougham* took occasion to express his approbation of the conduct of the navy board and the admiralty, with regard to the scientific improvements which had taken place in the system of ship-building. These improvements having casually fallen under his observation, he thought it just to bear testimony to the encouragement afforded to the eminently able men employed in this branch of the service.

Sir *Joseph Yorke* said, he was glad to find that the learned gentleman had inquired into this subject, and he had no doubt that if that learned gentleman's enlightened mind were applied to the other branches of the naval department, he would continue to admire the conduct of the admiralty.

Admiral *Markham* expressed his regret to find that it was proposed so materially to reduce the corps of marines, and that it was in contemplation to make still farther reductions next year in that very necessary corps. Every gentleman who heard him, and particularly those connected with the navy, must be fully aware of the merit and value of the marines, and also, that upon the commencement of war not a ship could act with effect without an adequate supply of these men. Surely, then, 6000 must be considered by every naval man quite inadequate as a permanent establishment. He should rather recommend an increase of that establishment to the extent of at least 3000 men. It was notorious that on the commencement of a war, the first object of the enemy was either to make a sudden stroke against us, or to send out a fleet in order to guard against any sudden stroke on our part; our navy should therefore be prepared to act with promptitude, which could not be the case if we were not adequately provided with marines. He would leave it to the House to decide whether it would be provident materially to reduce this valuable corps. A soldier could, it was known, be rendered effective in three months, while it would take a much longer period, to prepare a marine, who was a sort of amphibious animal, requiring experience and discipline on both elements. On both elements, too, the marines had shown their skill and valour; and to prove this he could refer to their conduct, not only in the former American war, but throughout the whole of the last contest [Cries of Hear, hear!]. Why then reduce such a useful and gallant body? In the discussions which had lately taken place with regard to the proposed standing army, one argument adduced to justify the amount of that army was, the necessity of employing soldiers to take care of our dock-yards; but he would ask, in the name of common sense, why not rather appoint marines to that service, and make a proportionate reduction in the standing army? Why should soldiers be preferred on a service so much more natural for marines?

Mr. *Forbes* was proceeding to state the case of a naval officer, whom he conceived to have been very unjustly treated, in consequence of the existing arrangement with respect to pensions, when he was called to order by

Sir *G. Warrender*, who observed, that this subject would more properly come under the consideration of the House upon the discussion of the postponed estimates on Monday next.

Mr. *Forbes* resumed and stated, that the gallant officer to whom he had alluded had lost a leg in the service, yet in consequence of the very inadequate pension allowed him, he was actually worse off with respect to pay; that, indeed, he would have been much better provided for if he had never been wounded.

Mr. *Rose* pressed the objection of sir G. Warrender as to the irrelevancy of the hon. member's statement to the question before the House, and on a cry of Chair, Chair!—

The *Speaker* observed, that being applied to he must say that the hon. member's observations were not strictly within the limits of the question before the House.

The report was agreed to, and on the motion of the chancellor of the exchequer, that the report of the navy estimates on Wednesday last should be further considered,

Mr. *Wynn* animadverted upon the loose manner in which the contingencies of the navy were stated in those estimates—the expense of postage, of carrying parcels, and of rewards for procuring seamen being all stated under one head, without any specification of the amount of each item, which specification should, in his opinion, distinctly appear.

Mr. *Croker* observed, that when this statement was received at the admiralty from the navy office, it was intended to send it back, with a view to obtain the specification alluded to, but understanding it to be the intention of an hon. member to move for a detailed statement of the contingencies in all the public offices, such a proceeding was thought unnecessary, as it would create delay, and as it was proposed in compliance with that motion, to lay the detail before the House on a future day.

Mr. *Brougham* adverting to the number and salaries of the lords commissioners of the admiralty observed, that although since the abolition of the office of lord high admiral, the number of the lords commissioners was generally seven, it sometimes did not exceed five; and he could not see any necessity for more than five at present, or during the existence of peace. Then the salaries of the puisne lords amounted to 6000*l.* per annum, while that of the first lord was 5000*l.*; in all 11,000*l.* With the amount of this allowance he did not mean to find fault; he only objected to the distribution of it. For he could not conceive any just ground for allowing no more to the naval lords, who had a great deal of business to do, than to the civil lords, who really did little or nothing.

Here the Speaker appearing to be indisposed,

Mr. *Ponsonby* rose and observed, that he was sure he expressed the general feeling of the House that this discussion should proceed no further.

The *Speaker* said, that he felt deeply sensible of the motive which produced this suggestion, but assured the House that the debate might proceed without inconvenience to him.

Mr. *Brougham*, however, moved that the House should immediately adjourn.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that this proceeding would be inconvenient, but he moved the adjournment of the discussion to Monday next, which was agreed to; and the other orders of the day being disposed of, the House adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Monday, April 8.

BILL FOR DETAINING NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE.] Earl Bathurst having moved the order of the day for the second reading of the Bill for the more effectually detaining in custody Napoleon Buonaparté,

Lord *Holland* said, he did not rise to oppose the bill, as he was well aware that though he might think there was neither magnanimity nor sound policy in the mode in which we were proceeding with respect to this individual, yet a majority both in parliament and out of doors were of opinion that some such proceeding was necessary. He had on a former occasion stated the reasons on which his opinion was founded, and would not now repeat them, especially as he should have the opportunity of recording the reasons of his dissent on the Journals—a privilege of which he strongly felt the value on this occasion. He was astonished, however, that the noble secretary of state should have proposed the second reading of a bill of this sort, without stating the reasons on which it was founded, and even without any explanation as to its nature and object. There was one thing to which he could not help calling their lordships' attention, as connected with this bill—he alluded to the treaty by which Great Britain had become bound to keep him. Napoleon delivered himself up in July last; and, soon after, a treaty appeared, by which Great Britain, without any stipulation in its favour, had gratuitously offered to guard and keep him. Now, he would ask, when we had him in our power to be dealt with according as the law of nations, or the municipal law and policy of this country might dictate, why it was that ministers had voluntarily shackled the councils of this country by such a treaty? Because, if we were authorized by the law of nations, and the municipal law of the country, to detain Napoleon, then we had full power to do so without this treaty. If the other powers considered it as an advantage that he should be so kept, why did we do it gratuitously? Two of these powers stood in a peculiar situation with respect to Buonaparté. One was nearly connected with him by marriage, and another had not only been connected with him by treaties, but the sovereign had avowed the strongest personal attachment to him, and that, too, after those acts for which he had been particularly stigmatized—the murder of the Duc D'Enghien, and all the other crimes of that description—after the invasion of Spain, the greatest political crime he had ever committed. If, notwithstanding all this, they thought that it was for the safety of Europe that he should be detained as a prisoner of war, why should we so detain him under a treaty with them, without any stipulation for the benefit of this country? The ministers had him in their own power; and if they were justified in detaining him by the law of nations and of this country, then, when the other powers called upon them for a treaty to effect that object, they might have insisted upon some benefit in return for their own country. Why, then, did they spontaneously and gratuitously undertake this office, especially when the country was so much overburthened with the immense military establishment which the ministers were resolved to keep on foot, and when one of them had stated, as the ground of his opinion on that head, that the true statesman-like maxim in these cases was, not to consider the actual danger, but those dangers which by possibility might arise? Was it not possible that the policy of Great Britain might be different from what it was at present? Was it not possible that our political views might be different from those of Russia and Prussia? Why, then, did ministers conclude a treaty onerous on this country without any equivalent? The treaty began with an allegation, that Buonaparté was then in the power of the allied sovereigns, which was unfounded in fact, for he was then in the power of Great Britain alone; and it was curious, after this, to find, that Great Britain was to be loaded with all the expense and all the responsibility of keeping him, for the gratification of their revenge or ingratitude, and that, too, without compensation. Without any reference to the individual himself, or what might be his deserts, we ought to deal with him in a manner becoming this country. We ought not to consider merely what punishment the individual might be thought to deserve, but what punishment it became a great and liberal nation to inflict. With respect to the bill itself, he wished the house to consider what it was, and what would be its legal consequences when it passed. In reading the bill he found great difficulty in understanding the first of these points. But whether their lordships approved of the detention or not, it was proper that they should understand clearly and distinctly what they were to do—whether the bill was necessary to give the power of detaining him as a prisoner of war, or whether it was competent to the ministers legally to detain him as such by the law of nations, and by the municipal law of this country as it now stood. He knew it was generally considered as expedient that he should be so detained, whether it was at present legal or not: but it did not follow that the same provisions were necessary, whether he might be legally detained or not. If he might be legally detained as a prisoner of war, then the bill ought to be declaratory merely, and then such restrictions and other provisions might be added as should appear proper. If it was expedient that he should be kept as a prisoner of war, though that was not at present legal, then it would be necessary to enact—not as this bill did, but—that Napoleon should be considered as a prisoner of war from the time when he delivered himself up; and then there ought to be an indemnity to those who had done what they had no legal authority to do. That sort of indemnity was, in fact, inserted in the St. Helena intercourse bill. It would, therefore, be of great use to have the opinion of the judges, whether Napoleon might, as the law now stood, be detained as a prisoner of war. All he contended for was this, that it was necessary to know what was the actual state of the matter on which they were to legislate. Was Buonaparté a prisoner of war by the law as it at present stood, or was he not? Till they knew this, they were legislating in the dark, and it was necessary therefore to desire the attendance of the judges. The noble and learned lord (Eldon) might smile, but the noble and learned lord knew that doubts had existed on this head, and it was fitting to know exactly how the matter stood before they proceeded with a bill, from which it might be inferred that it was not legal. The first question arose on the words of the bill, "he shall be deemed and taken to be, and shall be treated and dealt with as a prisoner of war." If, then, he was to be held and dealt with as a prisoner of war by virtue of this bill, what would be the legal consequences of such an enactment? He should then propose to submit to the judges these questions—1st. What was the precise description of an alien enemy and an alien friend? 2d. Whether any person could be considered as an alien enemy, who was not the subject of any state with which we were at war? 3d. Was an alien enemy taken in war entitled to his Habeas Corpus, if detained after the signature of a treaty of peace, with all the powers or any of which he could be considered as a subject? 4th. Could any person he held as a prisoner of war, who was not the subject of any known state? 5th. Could any man be so detained who was the subject of a state with whom we were not at war? The answer to these questions would put their lordships in possession of the proper information on this subject. If there was no doubt about the law, why was this bill brought in? He was exposing himself very imprudently to the sort of answer which would be given to all this, namely, that he was an admirer of Buonaparté and the French revolution, and so forth; for all the arguments of the ministers on all occasions might be comprised under two general heads — Napoleon Buonaparté, and 1806. But leaving them the benefit of these arguments, he returned to the real question—why should they be called upon to pass a law in the dark? With respect to the other point—what would be the legal effect of the bill, perhaps it might be more regular to reserve that for the committee. But he would now ask any of the noble and learned lords, whether a prisoner of war could bring an action against any of his majesty's subjects? And if not, whether it was his being in custody, or his being a subject of a state at war with us, that was the cause of it? He understood that a prisoner of war might maintain such an action, unless his adversary pleaded that he was an alien enemy; and the effect of such a plea he understood to be, that the plaintiff's suit was stopped or suspended, but not quashed, because the court contemplated, that the alien enemy might become an alien friend, and then he would be entitled to proceed with his suit. This bill would render the law absolutely unintelligible on this point. The common law had no provision about modes of proceeding in the case of a prisoner of war, and only contemplated the character of alien friend or alien enemy, and recognised the keeping an alien enemy in custody; and unless they knew precisely what was the state of the law at present, the consequence of passing this bill would be to involve the matter in legal subtleties, which even the ingenuity of the noble and learned lord could not unravel. He wished, therefore, that the second reading of the bill should be postponed till after the holydays, as the judges, who were absent in the discharge of their important duties, could not attend till then. This could hardly be objected to on the ground of delay, as the ministers had the same means of bringing forward such a bill, if necessary, long ago; and the delay was therefore owing to themselves, and not to those who were desirous of having the proper information on the subject, before they agreed to a bill of which the consequences might be so important. He should therefore move, that the bill be read a second time the first Tuesday after the recess, and, for that purpose, that the word "now" be left out of the motion for the immediate second reading.

Earl *Bathurst* said, that his not stating the grounds of this measure did not arise from any inattention or disrespect to the House, but because he thought there were no objections to the bill which could properly be made in this stage. Buonaparté had surrendered himself, but that did not make him the less a prisoner of war. No act of his could suspend our right, and he was as much a prisoner of war as if he had been taken in battle. There might be some question whether, after the treaty of peace, he could be detained as a prisoner of war; and this bill had been brought in to clear all doubt on that question, and to regulate the mode of his detention. The character of a prisoner of war was well known in our statute book, and that, therefore, was the character under which he was to be detained. The noble lord had referred to the treaty about his detention, and had adverted to certain questions of policy on that head: but the noble lord forgot that we were at that time acting in strict concert with the other powers; and that when Napoleon was in the power of one, it followed that he must be considered as in the power of all the allies. We had no exclusive power over Buonaparté, for he had given himself up in consequence of a common effort. As to our undertaking to keep him, it was certainly an advantage to this country to be allowed to do it, as we must be better satisfied that it would be properly done, than if he had been left in the power of any other. Each had an equal right to demand him for safe custody; and none could keep him with more honour, security, and lenity, than this country. If he had been left in the power of Russia, Austria, Prussia, or France, we might not have been so well satisfied. The noble lord said that the policy of these powers might not be always the same as now. That was true, but might they not say the same thing as to us? Our policy might vary, and therefore it was perfectly reasonable that they should have an obligation on our part, independent of our existing policy. The noble lord seemed to consider that the dignity of the House required that we should have precise information how the law stood at present: but he could not see how the dignity of the House was concerned, and under this bill Buonaparté would be treated as a prisoner of war, with such restrictions as might appear proper. As this bill would place him in the situation of a prisoner of war, it did not appear material to have it ascertained how the law actually stood at present as to that point.

Lord *Holland*, in explanation said, that his argument had been misapprehended. He had no doubt that the other powers might wish to have him detained as a prisoner of war; but why did we consent to do this for them without some advantage to ourselves, they having an equal interest in his detention as we had? Might not the policy of this country change? and why did we come under an obligation to deal with Buonaparte as they wished, without any valuable consideration or particular advantage to ourselves? In order to illustrate his argument, he would put an extreme case, and he admitted that it was such. Suppose such a change in the views of Austria, with respect to France, as that the Austrian government might be inclined to place the son of Napoleon on the throne of France; and suppose a revolution in France, which would render this an easy matter. Then, suppose we might find it necessary to court the alliance of Austria and France against other powers of the continent. The son of Napoleon might insist upon the release of his father as a preliminary condition; and then the inconvenience would arise from our engagements with Russia and Prussia on this head. Some such change might take place in the policy of the country, not only under other ministers, but even under the present ministers; and why were the councils of this country thus shackled without any valuable consideration? Some thought that the detention of Buonaparté was legal; others thought it was not legal, but that it was expedient. Then, in order to know how to legislate correctly, their lordships ought to know how the law stood at present.

Earl *Bathurst* said, he had not misunderstood the noble lord. He again stated, that we had no exclusive right over Napoleon, and that it was reasonable our allies should ask some security for his detention beyond the existing policy of this country; and if it was reasonable in them to ask it, it was proper in us to give it. We should not be satisfied without some such security, if they had him.

Lord *Holland*.—Would they have him without a sum of money?

The Earl of *Lauderdale* said, he thought too much importance had been attached to this matter, and that ministers seemed to conceive there was something preternatural in the influence of this man. He might have been kept in this country very securely in the custody of a peace officer, and there were some very active peace officers who would take sufficient care of him: but Buonaparté seemed to have paralyzed the senses of the foreign sovereigns, and also the senses of those who framed this bill. Why did they not speak plainly out, instead of wording it in this obscure phraseology? The preamble was, that, whereas Buonaparté was detained at St. Helena, it was expedient that he should still be detained there: the obvious meaning of which was, that the cause of his being further kept there was, that he had been kept there before. This was holding out to our allies that Buonaparté had never been dangerous till he was confined at St. Helena; whereas they had found by experience that he was dangerous before. The noble earl said, that it was not necessary to decide whether he was a prisoner of war without this bill; but he insisted that it was impossible to pass it without deciding, that without it he was not a prisoner of war, and had been illegally detained, so that an indemnity might be necessary. This proved the necessity for the delay called for by his noble friend. The truth was, that ministers wished to avoid answering the question, whether he was or was not a prisoner of war before, and whose subject he was, or whether he was emperor of Elba, in order that they might by this bill confine him at St. Helena, not allowing even a corner in Europe to him who once possessed almost the whole of it. They had put in the St. Helena intercourse bill an indemnity to the lords of the admiralty; why had they not stuck an indemnity into this bill also, which would at least as well correspond with the title? He defied the ingenuity even of the learned lord on the woolsack to make sense of this bill as it at present stood.

The *Lord Chancellor* said, he laid no claim to the ingenuity ascribed to him by his noble friend, for he thought that it required no particular ingenuity to understand the bill, though a great deal of ingenuity had been employed to misunderstand it. He would not argue with reference to Buonaparté, or the year 1806, though he might, perhaps, think that that year had been nearly as mischievous to this country as Buonaparté; but what he said was this —that there was no good reason for consulting the judges, because, whether they should answer one way or the other, he should still think this bill necessary. The enacting part was, that he should be kept as a prisoner of war under certain restrictions; the restrictions being for the purpose of allowing all possible lenity consistent with the safe custody of Buonaparté, though perhaps not strictly conformable to the nature of the confinement of a prisoner of war. The nature of the restrictions was settled, and those who might assist him in any attempt to escape were to be liable to the same punishment as those who assisted in the escape of prisoners of war. The bill, therefore, was sufficiently plain and distinct. Really, the noble lord (alluding, we believe, to the manner in which the earl of Lauderdale looked at him while speaking) put such a face upon the matter—[a laugh]—gave such a countenance to it—that he did not know how to withstand it. With respect to the preamble, he must do as they did in the committee —postpone it.

Lord Holland's motion, that the word "now" be left out, was negatived: and the bill was read a second time. Lord Holland moved, that his questions be put to the judges. He did it only *pro formâ*, that he might lay the ground for recording his dissent. The question was accordingly put on these questions, and negatived.

PROTEST AGAINST THE BILL FOR DETAINING NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE.] The following protest was entered on the Journals:

"Dissentient;

"Because, without reference to the character or previous conduct of the person who is the object of the present bill, I disapprove of the measure which it sanctions and continues.

"To consign to distant exile and imprisonment a foreign and captive chief, who, after the abdication of his authority, relying on British generosity, had surrendered himself to us in preference to his other enemies, is unworthy the magnanimity of a great country,—and, the treaties by which, after his captivity, we bound ourselves to detain him in custody at the will of sovereigns to whom he had never surrendered himself, appear to me repugnant to the principles of equity, and utterly uncalled for by expedience or necessity. VASSAL HOLLAND."

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, April 8.

WAR MALT TAX.] Mr. *Harvey* presented a petition from the maltsters, farmers, private brewers and consumers of malt in the city and county of Norwich, praying for the immediate abolition of the war malt duty, as its continuance to the 5th of July was extremely disadvantageous to the public. The petitioners were satisfied of the good intentions of the chancellor of the exchequer, but they hoped he would instantly give up his tax, as they would be materially injured by its continuance. Barley had already experienced much disadvantage in the market, and the maltsters who had purchased malt, before the intention of the chancellor of the exchequer was known, had been very great losers.

Mr. *C. Calvert* said, that had he been in the House the other evening, he should have endeavoured to point out to the chancellor of the exchequer the deficiency of the resolutions on the war malt tax. What the chancellor of the exchequer offered to the brewer was, a drawback of 13*s.* 8½*d.*: but this was not a sufficient encouragement to the brewer to consume malt. If the right hon. gentleman wished to give a spur to the brewers for general purposes, he should rather say he would give 16*s.* to July; but if they brewed now, he would give them 17*s.* The brewers were a reasonable set of men, and did not expect to lose by what was proposed as favourable to the trade. An hon. baronet had thought that beer ought to be lowered a penny a pot; but if he had considered the matter fairly, he would have found, that when 16*s.* were put on malt, beer was raised a half-penny only; and, in taking off the duty, it would be lowered a half-penny. When the hon. baronet spoke thus, he (Mr. C.) might as well speak about the price of coals. Another hon. member wanted regulations as to the quality of beer; but he did not like a similar interference as to corn. It could be proved that the London beer was cheaper, better in quality, and more in quantity of measure, than the beer sold in other parts of the kingdom. The advantages gained by brewers were by no means what they were supposed to be. No great article of consumption had proceeded in so small a ratio as to the increase of price: the brewers, indeed, had studied to keep the price of beer as low as possible.

Sir *M. W. Ridley* explained his former observations; but still thought that beer ought to fall in the way he had stated, when the war malt tax should be removed. As to what had been said about coals, the fact was, that the coal owners had nothing to do with the raising of the price of coals in London. For many years their prices had not been raised. The rise was ascribable entirely to others. A great cause of beer being both high-priced and indifferent he considered to be owing to the practice of the monopoly of the public-houses by the brewers. He believed this not to apply so much to the London as the country brewers.

Mr. *Calvert* explained that he had only said he might might with equal propriety have asked questions about corn and coals. Porter had been raised and lowered, and it would soon be sold at four-pence halfpenny.

Mr. *Barclay* observed, that the whole advance made by the brewers in thirty-four years was 3*s.* per barrel or one farthing per pot. Let gentlemen, then, look back, and consider the price of malt, which, in 1782, was 28*s.* 6*d.* and the duty 10*s.* 6*d.* Now the price of malt was 65*s.* and the duty, in round numbers 35*s.* This made a difference as to barley of 18*s.* to 30*s.* Hops in 1782 were 40*s.* per cwt. and now were 6*l.* 8*s.*—an increase of three hundred per cent. Besides these matters, gentlemen could easily conceive the augmentation of charges in the providing of horses and other implements of trade. No reduction of price could now be expected but by the reduction of duty. He agreed with the hon. baronet, that it was an evil for the brewers to hold the public-houses, both to the country and to their own interests. It occasioned an unjustifiable increase of capital; but he did not believe that it applied to the London brewers.

Mr. *Curwen* argued that from the hon. gentleman's own statement there must have been an occasional deterioration in the quality of porter, in order to enable the brewers to go on at all. He urged the expediency of a reduction in the price of that wholesome beverage as calculated to diminish the pernicious effects resulting from drinking spirits.

Mr. *Western* was anxious to direct the attention of the House to the petition then before them, praying for the immediate cessation of the malt duties. The object of such a proposition was to relieve the market from its present state of derangement, for unless the malt duty were taken off now, no private brewers would consume malt until the month of July, and the market would continue in its present overloaded and depressed state.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* considered, that the proposition of immediate repeal might involve an injustice to the public brewer, if he paid for stock in hand; and if he did not, government would have to pay him nearly a million. The difference by the present arrangement to the private brewer would be inconsiderable. He would recommend to the public brewer to brew as largely and as early as possible, as the price of barley would rise: he would thereby gain more.

The petition was ordered to lie on the table.

PETITION FROM WILTS RESPECTING ECONOMY, REFORM, &c.] Sir *Francis Burdett* presented a petition from the county of Wilts, complaining of various grievances, and praying for retrenchment and reform. The hon. baronet specified some of the complaints in the petition, expressed his conviction that they were well grounded, and declared his entire concurrence in the feelings with which the petitioners viewed them.

The petition was brought up and read; setting forth, "First, that the distresses of agriculture and trade, which are notoriously prevalent throughout the whole country, have arisen from the great load of taxes, which have been employed principally in the cause of despotism and persecution, and from the operation of a paper currency, through the means of which the ministry, in conjunction with the bank of England, have now doubled, in fact, the burthens of all those who do not derive their means of living out of the public revenue; second, that it is in vain to look for a remedy in any thing but a diminution of taxation, and a strict inquiry into the means by which the treasures of the nation have been squandered, a rigid search for the present place of deposit of those treasures, and just and legal measures to recover, for the use of the nation, whatsoever part of them may have been fraudulently and iniquitously alienated from it; third, that it is degrading to the nation to be compelled to maintain a regular military force in time of peace to any extent whatever, and it must fill every man with indignation to be told that a considerable part of an enormous standing army, is necessary to preserve the peace in England, and to keep the people of Ireland shut up in their houses from sun-set to sun-rise; that it is, however, notorious that an audacious and insolent minister has dared openly to avow these purposes for keeping a large standing army embodied, and that it is his intention to rule us, if possible, by the point of the bayonet; the petitioners cannot entertain the smallest doubt, but that they are quite certain, that Englishmen, in whatsoever manner they may be Germanized in point of dress, and in part commanded by foreigners, in open violation of law, will still be Englishmen in heart, and will never be found so base as to turn their arms against the lives and liberties of their countrymen; fourth, that it is manifestly unjust, and discovers an unfeeling disposition in the government, not to have reduced the salaries, the pensions, and other allowances, to persons paid out of the public money, while it is notorious that the price of all the necessaries of life, and the wages of labourers, and the profits of farmers and tradesmen, have been so materially reduced; and that the same unfeeling disposition has been, if possible, more signally discovered in the grant of an enormous sum of money out of the taxes to defray the expenses of a new matrimonial connexion, while it is well known that an immense sum of money is deposited in the funds belonging to his majesty, and which money has been exempted from the payment of the property tax, which was so rigidly exacted from the whole of his subjects, not excepting the widow and the orphan that had their mite in the same species of security; fifth, that it is impossible to believe that this industrious, persevering, and provident people, could ever have been brought into the present ruined state if they had had the choosing of persons to represent them to maintain their rights; and that, therefore, as the great cause of all the evils of the country, it is necessary that no time be lost in doing away that system of bribery and corruption which was so fully exposed in the month of May 1809, and the existence of which was, by the members of the House of Commons themselves, acknowledged to be as notorious as the sun at noon day; sixth, that therefore, the petitioners pray that, in order to afford the country a chance of restoration to prosperity, the House will adopt speedily such measures as will produce a constitutional reform in the Commons House of Parliament, so that in reality, and not in mockery, it may in future be said that Englishmen are taxed only by their own consent."

Mr. *Methuen* did not object to the House receiving the present petition; but he thought it necessary to state, that he would, in a day or two, present a counter-petition from the same county, and the House, by comparing the names and respectability of the petitioners, determine to which most consideration was due.

Sir *F. Burdett* replied, that the petition which he had then the honour of presenting, had been prepared at a meeting convened by the high sheriff of the county. He could not say whether the promised counter-petition would have to boast of such a circumstance.

Mr. *Methuen* did not mean to deny that it was agreed to, as stated by the hon. baronet, in a regular meeting, but the meeting was small and inconsiderable, there being present not more than twenty freeholders. The manner in which it conducted itself was not such as to invite free discussion, or to admit of a difference of opinion. He knew one gentleman who had attended with the intention of proposing some modification of the measures in the contemplation of the majority, and he was so hooted and clamoured down that his voice could not be heard. He should have the honour of presenting another petition, not for the purpose of opposing this one, in which his constituents could not concur, but of a different character, and expressing their own sentiments on public affairs.

The petition was ordered to lie on the table.

French Contribution.] Mr. *Douglas* wished to ask the noble lord opposite, whether he had any objection to the production of an account that had already undergone some discussion in another place, but which more particularly interested this House, which might be said to have a control over the revenue of the state. He alluded to a sum of 880,000*l.* which had been received by his Majesty's government from France, anterior to the signing of the treaty of peace at Paris, which had been applied, without any concurrence of parliament, to the support of the British army on the continent. He did not at present mean to give any opinion whatever on this subject, or to say whether his majesty's ministers were authorized to do as they had done, by any principle of the constitution or not. He could only say if such a power did exist under the constitution, that it was one of a most dangerous and objectionable description, into which it was the bounden duty of the House to examine at the earliest possible period. The motion that he had to submit was "That there be laid before this House, an account of all monies paid, payable, or due, to the British government from France since the 18th of June 1815, distinguishing the dates at which they were paid or became due, with the mode of their intended or actual application."

Lord *Castlereagh* stated, that the whole of that sum, with the exception of a small part employed in paying for the carriage of the statues and works of art to Italy, and the erection of a monument, already alluded to, at Rome, had been applied to the public service. This information had been given to the House again and again, in the course of several debates. There would be no difficulty, however, in furnishing the details required respecting the application of the money, if the hon. gentleman should make them the subject of a motion.

Mr. *Horner* professed himself entirely at a loss to conceive what the noble lord meant by alluding to his former statements and explanations. He remembered very well the discussions to which he referred, but he could not recollect a single word that explained the use to which this money was applied, or even hinted at its existence. If an account had formerly been given, no account would now be required; nor would the subject seem now so new to the House, as he was sure it must do to all not in the confidence of ministers. In the accounts laid on the table of the House, there was not one word about this sum of 880,000*l.* In consequence of a motion of an hon. and learned friend of his, an account of the money contributed by France to this country was produced; but it merely included the amount of the sums received in consequence of treaties and conventions.

Lord *Castlereagh* said, he was still satisfied of the truth of the observations he had already made, namely, that this subject had been distinctly explained in the course of debate on former nights, both by himself and his right hon. friend, the chancellor of the exchequer, who, on opening his detail of the financial plans for the year, had adverted to the appropriation of this sum. In answer to a question from an hon. gentleman who had raised a doubt of the sufficiency of the sum taken by government for the support of the corps on the frontiers of France, he (lord Castlereagh) had also particularly alluded to the sums paid, and to be paid by France to the allies, as contributions agreed upon previous to the treaty of peace, in lieu of the quota of men which she was to have furnished, of which Great Britain was to have ten millions of francs, or 400,000*l.* sterling, beside 120 francs per man, for the clothing of the army under the duke of Wellington. When the papers alluded to were produced, however, these items would be fully detailed.

Mr. *Bennet* could not recollect that one word of the explanation now given was ever before offered to the House. He remembered that he had raised an argument against maintaining a force of 30,000 men in France, on the ground that the contributions supplied by that kingdom were insufficient for defraying its charges, and thus afforded an opportunity of stating the utmost farthing that was expected to be derived from that source; but no answer of this kind was given.

Lord *Castlereagh* again maintained, that he perfectly recollected explaining the circumstances to which the hon. gentleman had objected, and distinguishing between the money received in consequence of treaties and conventions, and that which was booty of war.

Mr. *Brougham* remembered a distinction stated between what was called booty, and contributions made in consequence of treaty; but no notice was then taken of the sum now found to have come under the management and disposal of ministers. When an hon. and learned friend of his (sir James Mackintosh) had moved for the accounts of what we had received from France, no hint was given that any thing more than what was contained in the return was actually come into our possession. Would it not have been proper, would it not have been fair, when that motion was made, for the noble lord to have come forward and said, "I will grant you the account you require, but there are sums which the wording of your motion will not reach; I therefore, being willing to give you the fullest satisfaction, and to disclose the whole accounts between this country and France, would wish the motion so expressed, that it shall include both the sums contributed by treaty, and those received as booty?" Instead of this, the motion was agreed to without alteration, and not a hint given but that the return made in consequence contained a full view of all receipts, while ministers in the mean time were receiving and pocketing this immense sum, unknown and unaccounted for. Was this fair dealing, to withhold the disclosure of nearly a million of money, when another million was moved for? Was it fair to keep back all mention of it until it was accidentally discovered? This appeared to him a subject of the greatest importance. If the constitution allowed the levying of sums of money for the Crown without providing the means of disposing it, it admitted the exercise of a power that might be turned against itself, and for which, therefore, some remedy should be speedily provided. He had brought forward the subject of the droits of the admiralty when he had formerly the honour of a seat in that House; but nothing had since been done to regulate the use of such monies, although some measure was loudly called for by every consideration of constitutional policy.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* was glad the subject was brought under the view of the House, and that an opportunity of offering proper explanations had been thus afforded. He remembered very distinctly, that when he stated the resources of the country in the beginning of the session, and the means we had for supporting our establishments, he mentioned that 700,000*l.* had been received from France, and applied to defray the charges of the army in that country. He mentioned, in addition, that 800,000*l.* were applicable to the public service from the contributions that had been granted. When he spoke of these sums, he could not be supposed to allude to the sums advanced in consequence of treaties and conventions. The reason why the money in question had not been accounted for in the return made to an hon. and learned gentleman's motion was, that he imagined the motion was only intended to procure a statement of the sums accruing from treaties sanctioned by the House. The accounts would, however, immediately be laid before it, and he doubted not that the manner in which this sum was disposed of would meet with general approbation.

Mr. *Tierney* professed he was quite ignorant that the sum of 880,000*l.* had been received prior to treaties or conventions, and therefore thought that the noble lord's explanations, and those of his right hon. friend, had not been very clear. The right hon. gentleman now declared his willingness to show how the money was spent, but was it not his duty to have told us formerly how much we had to spend? Was it not to be expected that he would have asked the advice of parliament about the disposal of it, before ministers proceeded to apply? This was a question of great constitutional importance, and ought not to be lightly passed over. He believed ministers gave a true account of the amount, and that they would employ it for the public advantage, but still we had only their word for it. It might be 880,000*l.*, or a million, or more, or any sum, for all the evidence that was before the House. He would wait, however, for the account, and in the mean time would ask the noble lord, if the contributions levied upon France would be sufficient to maintain our army in that country, and whether there were more sums allotted for that purpose than had hitherto been disclosed?

Lord *Castlereagh* reminded the right hon. member that he had on a former night distinctly stated all the arrangements that had been entered into for the receipt and distribution of the sums drawn from France, of which our proportion came to about six millions. There was no part of the arrangement that had ever been made a matter of concealment by ministers. His right hon. friend had stated, that a part of the sum in question had been applied to the liquidation of some of the army extraordinaries in Portugal. If the right hon. gentleman really supposed that this money was sufficient to defray the whole of the expenses of our army in France, he could show him that this was impossible. There would in this year be an actual deficiency of 270,000*l.* We had not, in fact, received the amount of our proportion this year, because, from the impoverished state of the finances of Austria and Prussia, it was found advisable to let them receive ten millions of their share of the contributions in advance; in consequence we should receive less in the first than in the subsequent years. It was taken as a general principle, that 150,000 men should be paid by France; but it never was understood, that the provision made by France for the corps of observation covered the whole of the expenses, but that afterwards means would be found to cover them: but, supposing the occupation to last five years, and 30,000 British troops be retained, their expense would finally be covered by the amount of the contributions. This was the course that had been understood, and it had been distinctly explained before.

Mr. *Tierney* replied, that by the arrangement signed by the noble lord, we were altogether exonerated from this charge; but he now said, that we were this year to be saddled with an expense of 270,000*l.* It was material this should be understood, for the amount must be made good; and when what was to be given to the army was taken into the account, it would be found that next year, the deficiency, instead of being 270,000*l.* would amount to 500,000*l.* or 600,000*l.*

Lord *Castlereagh* allowed this might happen in the first and second years, on account of the sums allowed to the allies. France engaged to support 150,000 men on an average of the pay of the continent. The sum was sufficient for continental troops, but insufficient for ours; but it was calculated that our extraordinary expenditure would be covered by the extraordinary contribution. This had been the course of his argument on former occasions.

Mr. *Tierney* did not remember the course of the noble lord's argument, but he recollected very well that he had said the country was to be entirely freed from all charge on account of our army in France; and he was prepared to show, that there would be 270,000*l.* of a deficiency in the French contributions for its maintenance. Next year there would be a greater deficiency, not less than 650,000*l.* [Here lord Castlereagh said, across the table, that would not happen till the third year.] The right hon. gentleman continued by saying, that it was doubtful whether our present securities would last for three years. France was to pay the whole. His lordship had now abandoned this hope for two years; but "wait," says he, "till the third year, and all will be cleared." So we were to depend upon the money granted by France as an indemnity for the expenses of the war, for the payment of those troops that were to maintain the peace! The Bourbons promised an indemnity, and we were to spend the whole of it, not in recovering ourselves from our distresses, but in supporting them upon the throne!

Mr. *Douglas* thought the subject of infinite importance, and that it might be clearly understood, he gave notice that if no member more adequate to the task should make a motion on it, he would himself do so at an early period after the Easter recess.

Mr. *Baring* said, the House had formerly been told that the establishment in France was to cost us nothing; but it now turned out, that in consequence of the preference given to other powers, a considerable sum would have to be disbursed by this country during the first two years of the arrangement, and that we should have to wait till the succeeding years before we could receive our due share of the sums stipulated to be paid to us. Here he could not but think that the noble lord had been overreached in the negociation. He seemed, at all events, to have different ideas with respect to the security of the sums to be paid by France from those entertained by the princes of Germany; for he knew that those princes were at present offering to sell their contingencies at 50 per cent. discount.

Lord *Castlereagh* said, he knew nothing of the discount at which the necessities of the powers of the continent might induce them to sell the sums to fall due to them; this was a subject of which the hon. gentleman must be a better judge than himself; but he would only again put the House in mind that the Russian government, of which the finances were not generally thought to be in the most flourishing state, had been induced to make the same arrangement with ourselves.

Sir *John Newport* thought, that, considering the loan which we had given to Austria, of which we had not received one farthing, although the noble lord had said we might sue them in the imperial court, we ought to have taken more pains to secure our interests.

Mr. *Brougham* said, the House was not aware of the importance of the statement made by his hon. friend, namely, that the contributions to Germany, were for sale at 50 per cent. under their nominal value, and this, too, in a market where there were no purchasers, even for a simple thousand.

The motion was then agreed to.

REPAIRS OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S OFFICE.] Mr. *Bankes* alluded to the Repairs going on at the front of that old and respectable looking building at Whitehall. He wished to know whether any report had been made by the board of works, on the necessity of these repairs; to ascertain which, he should move for an estimate of the expenses, together with a report of the dangerous state, and a summary account of the plan intended to be adopted in the repairs of the front of the office of the secretary of state.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* would recommend the hon. gentleman to move for any correspondence that had taken place between the board of works and the treasury. From the inquiries he had made upon the subject, he had understood that these repairs had been undertaken without any specific authority from government; as the board, on its authority, on the representation of the surveyor, could undertake any repairs not exceeding 1,000*l.* It had been reported that old stones often fell out from the front of this building, to the great danger of the passengers. It was found that to repair the whole with stone, would amount to about 3,000*l.*; and therefore to save as much as possible, buttresses of brick-work were erecting, and it was proposed to wash the whole over, so as to give it the appearance of old stone. To him the new appearance of the building was, he must confess, extremely unsightly; and he had taken it upon himself to direct a suspension of the order under which the works were carried on, until the pleasure of the House should be known on this subject.

Mr. *Bankes* was not aware that any correspondence had taken place upon the subject, or he should have shaped his motion accordingly.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that the correspondence had taken place since the matter had been noticed in the House, and when produced, would give a full report of every thing connected with the subject.

Mr. *Tierney* hoped that some care would also be taken in improving the inside of the treasury. He owned he was rather astonished that a gentleman, who could swallow the whole expense of the department of a third secretary of state, should affect to give so much importance to a matter of trivial economy of this kind, by which 1,000*l.* at most could be saved.

Mr. Bankes then moved, "That there be laid before this House, copy of any correspondence between the office of works and his majesty's treasury, relating to the probable expense of repairing the front of the secretary of state's office, Whitehall; together with any report which has been made by the office of works, as to the dangerous state of that building; and a summary statement of the manner in which it is proposed to finish the work."—Ordered.

Mr. *Brougham* said, he rose to move for certain papers connected with the appointment of commissioners, whose offices, he apprehended, would turn out to be mere sinecures. Their emoluments did not, in fact, as far as his knowledge went, exceed 200*l.* a year; but the smallness of the sum satisfied him that his motion would receive the support of the hon. member for Corfe-castle. His only fear on that point was, that the hon. member, whose love of economy was always confined to the more minute heads of the public expenditure, should decline to countenance any proposition for retrenchment which did not originate with himself [A laugh].

Mr. *Bankes* spoke to order. He considered the hon. and learned gentleman to be quite irregular in prefacing any motion for papers by a personal attack of this description. Although he might not always agree with the opinions of particular individuals or parties, he was not afraid to submit his conduct to a comparison with that of any member in that House. He had always supported, according to the measure of his ability, those plans of economical reform which he deemed practicable, and consistent with the security of the country. It was known to the House that he had assisted no long time since in maturing a plan by which a million and a half were saved. He had supported the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Tierney) in all his motions with respect to the excesses in the civil list, and should pursue the same independent course of proceeding as long as he had the honour of a seat in that House.

Mr. *Brougham* protested against the precedent of an hon. member professing to rise to order, and then entering upon a personal vindication of himself against a supposed attack. In the present instance no such attack had been made; for it must be in the recollection of all who heard him, that he was not the first person in that House who had observed, that in every question of practical economy, the degree of the hon. member's support was in proportion to the insignificance of the sum to be saved. He was equally justified in remarking, that when the existence of a great and unnecessary state employment was at issue, the hon. member forgot his economy, which, however, soon re-appeared when the expense of a little brick and mortar was under consideration. The purpose of his rising was to move, "That there be laid before this House, an account of the names, salaries, and emoluments of the commissioners and other officers of the court of appeal, from the judgments of the board of excise during the year 1815, the number of days each commissioner attended during the said year, and the number of appeals heard by them, distinguishing the number of such as have led to a reversal of the decision below, together with the other places held by each commissioner."—Ordered.

Correspondence between the Lord Chamberlain and the Treasury.] Mr. *Tierney* observed, that his examination of the papers on the table induced him, with a view of rendering them complete before the House should go into the inquiry upon the excess in the civil list, to move, "That there be laid before this House, copies of all correspondence between the lord chamberlain of his majesty's household and the lords commissioners of the treasury, on the subject of the estimates directed to be produced from the lord chamberlain's department.

Lord *Castlereagh* objected to the calling for partial information at present, on the same principle as he opposed it on a former night. It was taking merely one corner of the question, and bringing a subject before the House on which they could not fairly decide till all the documents were before them.

Mr. *Tierney* denied that he had any design of looking only to a corner of this question, to use the phrase of the noble lord. A regulation had passed under the sign-manual, that the lord chamberlain should furnish estimates of the expense of the household at quarterly periods; and for the first three quarters these documents were already produced. If the estimates for the last quarter were not forthcoming also, he had a right, in his place, to ask why the marquis of Hertford had not complied with directions of the Prince Regent, and why a public officer dared to fly in the face of the sign-manual? Although he stood alone, he was determined on such a question to take the sense of the House.

Mr. *Bankes* agreed with the right hon. gentleman, that the accounts for the last quarter, and all the correspondence illustrative of them, were essential to a full consideration of the subject.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* was far from denying that explanation ought to be given why this wholesome regulation was not complied with. The question was not, whether the regulation ought or ought not to be complied with, but whether the House was now to be taken by surprise. If the papers produced along with the accounts should not be sufficient, then it would be competent for any member to move for others. Undoubtedly a *primâ facie* reason was made out for inquiry why the estimates for the last quarter in the lord chamberlain's department were not produced; but the question was, whether the necessity was so pressing as not to allow the House to wait for the general statement, which would probably satisfy the House, and prevent any farther inquiries on the part of the right hon. gentleman.

The House then divided: For the motion, 40; Against it, 49. Majority against it 9.

List of the Minority.

Barham, J. F.
Bankes, H.
Baring, sir T.
Bennet, hon. H. G.
Birch, Joseph
Burrell, W.
Barclay, C.
Burdett, sir F.
Brougham, H.
Creevey, Thos.
Calvert, Charles
Douglas, hon. F.
Fergusson, sir R. C.
Folkstone, lord
Foley, T.
Gordon, R.
Grenfell, Pascoe
Heathcote, sir G.
Hammersley, H.
Howard, hon. W.
Howorth, H.
Lambton, John G.
Lyttelton, hon. W.
Moore, P.
Martin, John
Martin, H.
Monck, sir C.
Methuen, Paul
Newport, sir J.
Newman, R.
O'Hara, Charles
Ossulston, Lord
Ponsonby, rt. hon. G.
Romilly, sir S.
Russell, lord W.
Sefton, earl of
Smith, W.
Tierney, rt. hon. G.
Western, C.
Wynn, C. W.

TELLERS.

Ridley, sir M. W.
Calcraft, John

ORDNANCE SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES.] The House having resolved itself into a Committee of Supply, and the Paper Supplementary to the Ordnance Estimates, as presented to the House on the 19th of February, being referred to the said Committee,

Mr. *Robert Ward* rose. He observed that the charge of the office of ordnance, for the present year, was, in the original estimate 1,639,399*l.* The average expense, during the last five years, had been 4,300,000*l.* per annum. They had, in the first instance, reduced the amount to 1,639,399*l.*; but, on consideration, a farther reduction of 137,307*l.* was made in the improved estimates. After he had made this statement, he hoped the committee would give some credit to the department to which he was attached, for having shown a due degree of attention to the principle of economy.

The ordinary for the present year was……					£.693,545	14	1
Extraordinaries……					432,996	8	9
Unprovided ..	1814 ..	67,205	9	10			
	1815	16,851	13	4	84,057	3	2
For Ireland……					228,799	19	6
Making a total for the United Kingdom of..					1,439,399	5	6
There was, then, an article, intituled "Expenses of Reduction," which amounted to					200,000	0	0
Making a grand total of……					£.1,639,399	5	6

The last article was called "expenses of reduction," because the charge was incidental to the return of peace, and would not occur again. It arose from the reduction of our great establishments, and would be dismissed at the end of the year, and would, therefore, form no part of the actual peace establishment. Even the superannuations, which amounted to 164,814*l.* together with some other items in the estimates, making a sum of 400,000*l.*, could not be considered as actually belonging to the peace establishment. When he recollected what had taken place at the end of former wars, he trusted the committee would agree with him, that the gentlemen connected with the ordnance department were not wanting in duty to the House and to the country at large, in making the reductions they had done. Even at the end of the American war, when our forces were not near so numerous as they were during the contest which had been just terminated—when a very great difference existed in the value of money—when expenses, both in private and in public life, were comparatively small—even at that time, in 1783, the peace estimates were 1,449,000*l.* Certainly of that sum a considerable part was placed under the head of "unprovided for." There was a sum of 800,000*l.* unprovided for in previous years; and, besides this, a debt of 100,000*l.* But those who had to discharge the duties of the ordnance office, at the present period, came forward with an item of only 84,057*l.* for ordinaries unprovided for, and without a single farthing of debt. On the ordinaries, altogether, there was a reduction of 447,000*l.* This had been chiefly owing to the reduction of the military; but something had also been saved in the civil department. All the war salaries throughout the office had been put down. The secretary of the board had been deprived of his war allowances, and the same proceeding had taken place with respect to the chief clerks. All the officers who received war allowances had forfeited them, except a few who were at present abroad. In addition to this, the military secretary of the master-general, who, if the war had gone on, would have been placed on the same footing as a secretary of state, and would have received 500*l.* per annum more than he now enjoyed, was obliged to give up that allowance. If the committee would look to the statement under the head of "Woolwich," they would find that a very considerable reduction had been made. In the laboratory, carriage, and store departments great savings had taken place. In the laboratory alone, a diminution of 900*l.* had been made. In the carriage department, also, a reduction of 800*l.* had been effected. He by no means meant to say, that these were the sole reductions. For instance, the discharge of labourers and artificers reduced the expenses of the department nearly 100,000*l.*; but as their dismissal must necessarily follow the cessation of hostilities, the officers of the ordnance department took no credit to themselves for the saving.

On the subject of the civil branches, he would be ready to give every information to the committee—but he would, at present, proceed to the more interesting part of the question, that which related to the reduction made under the military head. He here begged to call the attention of the House to the high state of perfection at which our artillery service had arrived. The English artillery, at former periods, was inferior to that of her enemies; but the zeal of the officers of the artillery service of Great Britain and Ireland, had placed it far beyond comparison with that of any other country in the world. The great improvement in this science, throughout Europe, and particularly as far as our chief enemy was concerned, rendered it absolutely necessary that this country should encourage the formation of an efficient artillery corps. In former times it was customary to furnish large armies, with a very small proportion of artillery; but the chieftain who recently ruled over France, introduced a different system. He sent into the field a preponderating and overwhelming body of artillery, by which means he had gained many of his victories. Other powers were obliged to follow this example; for they felt that it was in vain to contend with armies, supplied with an immense artillery, unless they also could bring a great train into the field. Impressed with this idea, the master-general of the ordnance thought it was necessary, that a ground should be laid, in time of peace, for raising, as soon as possible, an efficient corps of artillery, whenever their services should be called for; and he also studied to reduce the expense, as far as was in his power. There was but one way to do this; namely, to discharge those persons who could easily be recruited, and to keep that class, which, if once sent away, it would be difficult to renew. He therefore acted on the principle of dismissing the gunners and privates, and retaining that gallant body of men, the artillery officers. The committee must well be aware of the laborious and painful education they were obliged to pass through, in order to qualify them for their situation; and they would feel, that if they were once dispersed, it would be a mere chance if they could ever be again collected together. The next point which the master-general had to settle was, the proportion between the army of the line and the artillery. In doing this, he looked to the proportion between armies in the field and the artillery attached to them. In the Peninsular war, the artillery was in the proportion of one-tenth to the army of the line. Considering the exigencies of the country as much as possible, the master-general had reduced the proportion to one-eleventh part of the army of the line—not allowing any thing for the embodying of the militia, which force amounted to 50,000 men. Our army of the line consisted of 111,000 men—the artillery of only 10,000, not including sappers and miners. The regiment of royal artillery, consisting of ten marching battalions, now consisted of 8374 men, and to which number it was reduced from 14,000 men. The brigade of horse artillery, consisted of 1,224 men, which, with the regiment he had already spoken of, formed a body of 10,000 men. The next item was that of the royal artillery drivers, composed of 1336 men. On this there was a reduction of 14,570*l.* In this service, the master-general had made a very considerable alteration. He had substituted, for the officers of the drivers' corps, such horse-artillery officers as were discharged from their original service, by which means that valuable body of men would be preserved to the country. By

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this means he would be enabled to dispense with three troops of horse artillery, over and above those already discharged, and, at the same time, preserve all the officers. With reference to their officers, the whole driver system might be deemed an absolute anomaly. The driver officer, with ever so high a rank (he believed they could arrive at the grade of major), had no command whatever in the field. They were merely allowed to look to the state of the horses, &c. The youngest lieutenant, when he entered the field, had a right to command the oldest captain of the drivers. The master-general had, however, altered the system, by placing regular officers of the horse artillery in the command of the drivers' corps. But, in justice to the officers of the drivers' corps, who were discharged, they would be permitted to retire, not on half, but on whole pay. If the corps were reduced altogether, they would, of course, receive only half-pay; but, as no fault was found with them, as they were removed for purposes of public convenience, it was nothing more than fair that they should retain their full pay. This same thing had formerly been done under similar circumstances, particularly in the case of the horse grenadiers. The charge incurred by this plan would be 1,600*l.* They had reduced the drivers' corps from twelve to five troops, for the service of the united kingdom, and one-half of the expense of the riding-house had been removed. Throughout the whole of the ordinaries the same attention had been paid to the system of reduction, as far as was consistent with the advantages of the service. The number of persons employed in the care of stores had been reduced from 350 to 37. The medical department, which formerly consisted of 102 gentlemen, was reduced to 64, in the original estimate—and in that now laid before the House it was brought down to 52 persons. A saving of 10,000*l.* was by this means effected. The number of cadets had been reduced by twelve; but the master-general did not think it advisable to interfere farther with the academy.

He now came to the extraordinaries, which amounted to 432,996*l.*, which was less than the estimate of the preceding year by 1,813,000*l.* This great reduction was occasioned by the consumption of stores, having ceased; and as all the depots in the empire were filled with every necessary store that could be thought of, no money would be called for, under that head, for a considerable time. Another cause of this reduction was to be found in the comparatively small number of works now carrying on. The House, on that point, had always manifested great jealousy. He did not complain of this; but he trusted that they would view it with an enlightened and liberal jealousy; and that they would not, because works were expensive, or on account of discussions in that House, set them down as unnecessary. The sums of money actually paid for new works, erected in this country during the last year, amounted to 6207*l.* Those in Jersey, 3300*l.* In Ireland, new works, 12,000*l.* In Cork, new works, 1800*l.* repairs 10,000*l.* And here he begged leave to observe, that it was a mistake to suppose, that all works included in the estimates were fortifications, many of them being of a civil nature, for which the board of ordnance were obliged to pay. In the United Kingdom, including Guernsey and Jersey, the new works amounted to 58,000*l.*, and the repair of the old, to 136,000*l.*; this comprised both civil and military buildings. The whole amount for the erection of new buildings, and the repair of the old, was 311,000*l.*; but, from the surplus remaining unexpended since the last year, he found himself in a condition to call for only 215,000*l.* when the estimates were originally presented; but, in consequence of farther reductions that had been made in the works at home and abroad, a diminution of 199,000*l.* had taken place. In the military corps a very considerable reduction had been effected. After very serious deliberation, it was determined that, instead of six field-pieces, all the brigades in the service should, in future, have only four. By this means a considerable reduction of horses would be made, without diminishing the strength and activity of the corps; because the same pieces might be served by the different men, in rotation. By this plan the forage of 412 horses, which cost, annually, 12,000*l.* would be saved.

He next came to the barrack establishment, which was also much reduced. There were 50 barrack stations—these were reduced to 14, and a saving of 1600*l.* was by that means effected. They looked also with anxious attention to the staff. During the war, three or four officers were found necessary for the ordnance staff. Amongst these, when he mentioned the name of general Mann, the inspector-general of fortifications, he was sure every gentleman would agree in opinion with him, that the service had derived much benefit from his exertions. He was taken off the staff, by which he lost the sum of 1642*l.* per ann. But, as his allowance, under these circumstances, would be very small, it was thought advisable to make it up 1500*l.* a-year, in lieu of 3000*l.* which he received during the war. The same principle was applied to general M'Leod. He was taken off the staff, and lost thereby 1642*l.* per ann. The board of ordnance were willing to give him an allowance of 1500*l.* a-year; but he himself applied to have the same allowance as the assistant-adjutant-general received, namely, 40*s.* a day, which, together with his other pay, amounted to merely 1050*l.* a-year. The whole estimate for the ordinary and extraordinary service of Great Britain alone, amounted to 1,126,542*l.* A saving had been effected of 137,000*l.*; and he hoped, in the ensuing year, that it would not be less than 170,000*l.* For these two articles, therefore, he would ask something less than a million. He was not so well prepared to say what the saving in Ireland would be in future, not having yet received the returns from that country; but there was a saving, as compared with the last year, of 149,000*l.*

He now came to the "expenses of reduction," which formed a distinct head. The first article was 100,000*l.* on account of the supply of small arms. This charge was occasioned, in consequence of an agreement made by government to take from the manufacturers at Birmingham a certain quantity of small arms, for three years, to prevent the danger which would be produced, if, in consequence of the cessation of a demand for muskets, they would be obliged to dismiss, on a sudden, the great body of workmen they had so long employed. Next year, this agreement would cost the country about 50,000*l.*, and after the ensuing year, the demand ceased altogether. The next charge was 86,000*l.* for the corps of German artillery, which was ordered to be disbanded as soon as possible. They entered our service on certain terms, which, of course, it was our duty to fulfil. One article of their agreement was, that they should receive so much per mile, to enable them to go home, and that stipulation would demand nearly 100,000*l.* The hon. gentleman then observed, that he would be ready to give every information on the subject of the estimates, and concluded by moving his first Resolution: viz. "That a sum not exceeding 989,220*l.* 7*s.* 10*d.* be granted to his majesty, for the charge of the office of ordnance for land service for Great Britain, for the year 1816."

Mr. *Calcraft* said, he could not expect to engage the attention of the House for any considerable time; for although he should enter on the subject with the best spirit and intentions, yet they must all feel how greatly they had been disappointed with respect to economy and retrenchment. He was willing to admit, that if so large an army were necessary to be maintained in France, a certain proportion of artillery must be kept for that establishment; but he conceived it was quite impossible to examine questions of this immense detail, even in a committee of that House. In 1796 the estimates had been submitted to an examination up stairs, and the same course ought to have been pursued on the present occasion. The hon. gentleman had boasted very much of the economical disposition of his own department, and had passed many eulogiums on the noble lord at the head of that department for lessening the expense. He had said, that for many months past they had been most anxiously and seriously employed with a view to reductions. Now, really, these very bold assertions, uttered by the hon. member while he held the original estimates in his hand, required the whole of the confidence, even of that hon. gentleman, with the whole train of artillery to support him, or certainly he could not have kept his countenance [Hear, hear!]. So far from wishing to diminish the expenses of this service, they had framed the estimates more with a view to what had happened than to what might happen. He would beg leave to call the attention of the committee to some of the articles of the hon. gentleman's supplementary estimates. He had stated the expense of the civil establishment for this year; but he should have looked back to the year 1796, when it was 17,000*l.* instead of 45,000*l.* In that year the war expenditure of the ordnance amounted to 1,954,655*l.* and they had worked the machine for this sum of 17,000*l.* during the war. For what reason, therefore, was it now increased to 45,000*l.* This was one sample of their painful examinations and most economical savings! He then found that we had made a reduction of a few hundred pounds at Woolwich. The carriage department, however, was perfectly unnecessary and useless in a state of peace. In the ordinary it was calculated at 3958*l.*; but there was now a reduction of 1840*l.*, which left it at 2118*l.*; but of this, 1120*l.* were allotted for the salary of the department: so that they had to administer only the remainder of that sum [Hear, hear!]. So it was with the reductions in general. He would state the number of the artillery establishment now, and at the former peace. The marching battalions in 1792 amounted to 3700 men, but they were now four times that number; and it ought to be shown what could have made that great accession of force necessary. If, however, the House would vote so large an army, we must have an equal proportion of artillery; but it was an establishment, the expenses of which must weigh down this country. But though it might be necessary to keep up the foot artillery, why should we maintain so great a number of drivers? This was quite a new introduction in our army. The drivers in England and Ireland were upwards of 1300 men: the whole of these were unnecessary, and a total waste of money. As to the sappers and miners, they were an infant institution in this country, but it was not necessary to keep up 1900 men of that description. From these two corps we might save from 1500 to 2000 men. He stated this, not merely from his own experience, but from the information of persons who were much better acquainted with the service. It was quite useless, however, to talk of economy, from the reduction of a few messengers and clerks. —With respect to works, the best thing we could do was to sell the materials, or suffer them to fall silently into the dust. The new kingdom of Chatham, as it had been called, was remarkable for nothing but its absurdity and expense; and we had much better get rid of Fort Amherst, Fort Chatham, and Fort Pitt, and all the other nonsensical forts. As to the works across the Medway, they should be either burnt or sold, as well as the two other communications across the river Thames. In regard to Plymouth, he understood that a most extraordinary work was going forward in that neighbourhood, which would cost 200,000*l.*; but the hon. gentleman had now taken 3000*l.* from that sum. In the current services and contingencies, he had deducted 58,000*l.* at one slice; but this, with all his disposition to economy, was much under the mark. He regretted to see that so little had been done in the reduction of the ordnance for Ireland. He had no doubt that the contingencies stated at 28,000*l.* for that country, might be considerably pared down. The works at Spike island might be discontinued.—Upon the whole he could not well propose, on the present occasion, any reduction of the number of men employed in the artillery service, because they required to be proportioned to the amount of our standing army, which had already been sanctioned by the House; but he thought that all the artillery-drivers now in this country might be disbanded, and the corps of sappers and miners greatly reduced. The truth was, ministers, in the scale of their establishments, seemed to be looking to war rather than peace, and this was the radical vice of all their estimates. They talked of estimates for a season of peace in the spirit of war. True policy would, on the contrary, dictate that in time of peace we should husband our resources with a view to future war—that we should keep up the skeletons merely of our various species of force, instead of damping the spirit of the country by oppressive burthens, and destroying the very seeds of those resources to which we were to look for support in the emergency of war. The hon. gentleman had told us to look at the peace establishment of the ordnance for 1783, which amounted to about 1,400,000*l.*; but he forgot to mention that, in consequence of previous improvidence, there was an advance debt of 800,000*l.* that year to be paid off, which, in fact, reduced the real cost of the establishment to 600,000*l.*—Mr. Calcraft said, he was sorry that any reduction had taken place in the number of cadets, because so much depended on science in this branch of service, and there would always be a sufficient number of vacancies to be filled up by them. The corps of cadets, instead of being reduced by 12, should be kept up as high as the demand.—Upon the whole, he was compelled to say, that he could not give the board of ordnance credit for a spirit of economy, What they proposed in February confuted any claims to that virtue which they made in March. He thought that considerable reductions were still practicable, particularly in the civil branch of the ordnance; and the large establishment of clerks and other officers at the Tower could only be required for the temporary purpose of winding up the accounts. He had to remark, however, to the credit of two of the principal officers there, that immediately on the return of peace they had taken the peace salary of 1000*l.* a-year, instead of the war salary of 1200*l.* He could not see why the secretary to the master-general should have 2000*l.*, while the secretary to the board had only 1000*l.*, with an addition of 500*l.* for length of service. This distinction appeared the more extraordinary, as Mr. Crewe, the secretary of the board, certainly one of the most indefatigable servants of the public, was employed from morning to night, and the secretary to the master-general could not do more. He should wish to know the reason of this distinction. Neither could he see why there should be a barrack-master at all in time of peace; and as the labours of the two secretaries would be materially diminished in time of peace, there would be no great difficulty in either of them performing the functions of barrack-master.

Colonel *Palmer*, on the statement made by the hon. gentleman opposite respecting the arrangement entered into for a supply of small arms, wished to observe, that as there were in the tower already 1,300,000 stand of arms, he could not think it necessary, that 100,000*l.* should be expended in the present year to purchase more.

Mr. *Bennet* saw a charge in these estimates for depots of arms at Shrewsbury, Chester, and other places. He knew something of the depot at Shrewsbury, because the ground on which it was built was purchased from his family against their wish; and yet, since its erection, not a single stand of arms had ever been deposited there. He believed that a more wanton and useless expense never was incurred.

Mr. *Wellesley Pole* stated the reasons for the erection of these depots at Shrewsbury and elsewhere, which took place while he was in the ordnance department. At the peace of Amiens it was found that the greater part of the small arms returned by the volunteers were in a state unfit for service. Therefore, on the breaking out of the war, and when between 6 and 700,000 volunteers took up arms, the board of ordnance determined to establish depots for the arms of the volunteers, so as to keep them well and secure in the event of peace, and that they might be distributed in the course of a few weeks in case of war again breaking out; which could hardly have been done in half a year, if the arms had all been returned to the tower. Hence it became necessary in some instances to purchase ground for building upon; and there being no depot whatever for the county of Salop, the ground in question, amounting to about an acre, was purchased for, he believed, 300*l.* The whole building, he believed, cost about 3,000*l.*; and in it the arms of all the corps of the county were to be placed. What use the board of ordnance had since made of these depots he did not know, but he understood it was their intention now to place in them the arms of the local militia.

Mr. *Bennet* said, he knew it as a fact, that the depot at Shrewsbury never had been used at all. It was a large brick building, of not inelegant structure, with a good garden and lofty walls all round it, and had been applied to no earthly purpose, though, of course, there were persons paid to take care of it. It formed, altogether, one of the most extravagant and ridiculous wastes of public money that had ever been witnessed.

Mr. *Wellesley Pole* repeated, that he was much mistaken if these buildings were not undertaken on the most mature consideration. It was calculated that, by the arms being placed there, instead of being returned to the tower, there would be a saving of many thousand pounds. The very design of the building was such, that it could not be used during war. It was not meant to be so used. But the case was, that when the 600,000 stand of arms belonging to the volunteers were returned to the tower at the peace, it was found that they were all in a state of waste; and the question was—shall we have depots where the country may again speedily find its arms without the expense and delay of procuring them from the tower? Thus the whole country might be armed in three weeks. Now that peace was come, no doubt government meant to make use of those depots to receive the arms of the local militia.

Mr. *Buller* was glad that the fortifications at Chatham were to be discontinued, and trusted that the best fortification would be found in the good disposition of the people of this country, whose burthens in times like these, should be watched with a strict and jealous eye.

Mr. *Tremayne* said, that an enormous expense had been incurred in the lines at

Plymouth; they were still going on, although no officer, with whom he had ever conversed, deemed them worth the expense.

Mr. *Douglas* called the attention of the committee to the expense of preserving the train of martello towers, which he considered as perfectly useless. Economy and reduction ought to be the order of the day; and in the present state of the country a small saving would be more felt than a large one at another time. It may be said that it was cheaper to hold them in repair now, than to have at a future time of war the expense of their re-building. This was a most dangerous sort of argument; it went to discourage any reduction of expense in time of peace. and to inculcate a prophetic anxiety for a renewal of war. By the adoption of such a rule of conduct, victories would be unattended with security, and peace unaccompanied by relief.

Mr. *Davies Giddy* called the attention of the hon. gentleman opposite, to a subject which he had pressed on his attention before,—he alluded to the ordnance maps. These, from the great scientific skill which distinguished them, he was of opinion ought to be given to the public. He now gave notice, that shortly after the recess, it was his intention to move for an Address to the Prince Regent, praying his royal highness to give directions for publishing them.

Mr. *Bankes* thought the maps of great importance to the country, and hoped they would be published. This could not be objected to, even on the score of economy, as that which the hon. gentleman who had just sat down recommended, might be done without expense. The sale of the maps would relieve the public from the expense of their publication.

Mr. *Robert Ward* rose to reply, and observed, that it was intended to publish the ordnance maps for the purpose described by his hon. friend, and that his omission to state that intention in his opening speech, was a mere accident. Then, as to the hon. member who commenced the attack upon the estimates, (Mr. Calcraft) it was unnecessary for that hon. member to state, that a long time had elapsed since he was at the ordnance office, and that his experience in that office was but short, for the hon. member's observations betrayed a total ignorance of the constitution and business of the office. For it would appear from the hon. member's views, that the office of secretary to the master-general, was merely that of private secretary, whereas, in point of fact, it was an office of the first importance and responsibility, certainly much beyond that of the secretary to the board. Indeed the board were merely the counsellors of the master-general upon the subject of estimates or pecuniary arrangements; and it had nothing at all to do with the military departments, which was exclusively under the direction of the master-general and his secretary. This secretary was therefore a most confidential agent, acquainted with the object, and employed to conduct the arrangements of every expedition. The amount, then, of such an officer's business might be easily calculated, when the ordnance had to direct in war the operations of 30,000 men. But with regard to the salary of this officer, it was, although a nominal increase, an actual saving to the public, as he had explained on a former occasion. It was known that until within a very few years, the income of these two secretaries was composed of fees and other perquisites, considerably exceeding in amount the present secretary's salary; but in consequence of a suggestion from the commissioners of inquiry, the office of second secretary was abolished, together with the system of fees; and an experiment was made to have all the business done by one secretary with his present salary. Therefore, if this experiment succeeded—and it was yet no more than an experiment—a saving to the public must be the consequence, for the fees received previous to the experiment came out of the public pocket.—The next topic upon which the hon. gentleman had displayed his ignorance, was that relating to barracks; and he thought he had made out a very triumphant case, when he stated that 900*l.* per annum were paid for the expense of managing 200*l.*; and certainly if the hon. gentleman had only happened to be right, his case would have been triumphant enough. The fact, however, was, that it fell within the barrack master's department to superintend the furniture for the barracks, the issuing of coals and candles, the inspecting of canteens, &c.—the whole amount of money which he had to manage in that way was not less than 30,000*l.* It argued therefore extraordinary ignorance in the hon. member, or wilful sophistry, for the sake of party tactics, to venture on so unfounded a statement. The only point, indeed, in which he had even an appearance of success, was in supposing that they who had brought forward the ordnance estimates on the 19th of February as the peace estimates, and incapable of reduction, and who had afterwards actually reduced them, were bunglers in their business, and did not know how to conduct it. He contended, however, that they were never produced on the 19th of February as the peace estimates for the year, any more than the estimates for the army and navy were so brought forward. They were produced merely as a general outline, and it was stated, at the time, that considerable reductions might be looked for in them. It so happened, that from the course of public business in that House, no opportunity had presented itself for taking them into consideration until that night,—being an interval of above six weeks; and was it to be wondered at therefore, that during that interval, they should have been busy at work in ascertaining what reductions could be made? [Hear, hear! and a laugh from the opposition benches.] He could assure the committee that the supplementary estimates of reduction were nothing more than carrying into effect that degree of retrenchment which the government had all along intended. It had been said, that nothing was really done; that no positive economy had been practised, and that only a few clerks and messengers had been dismissed. He begged to affirm, that a great deal more had been done, as any hon. member might be convinced, by examining the reduced estimates. But it was impossible to satisfy the hon. gentlemen opposite. If those clerks and messengers had not been dismissed, then they would have exclaimed that they were maintained for the purposes of patronage and influence. He really believed the hon. gentleman quarrelled with him upon the estimates, merely because there was so little with which he could find fault. The hon. member talked about the machinery of the ordnance being carried on in 1796 for 18,000*l.* per annum, but he surely could not suppose, even if there were no additions, that it could be carried on at present for the same sum. In fact, many new departments had been added, besides an inevitable increase of clerks. The surveyor-general's office was a most important office, and it was found absolutely necessary to have eight or ten additional clerks in it, unless it was intended to let every thing go into ruinous confusion. It would be the worst of all economy to cut down establishments, until the establishments had answered the end for which they were formed. When all the public accounts were brought up,—which he did not think could be done in less than three years,—then very considerable reductions might be made. With respect to the drivers' corps, he was indeed surprised to hear the opinions which the hon. gentleman had expressed. What would be the consequence of reducing that corps so as to leave only sufficient men to recruit the duke of Wellington's army in France, and the establishment in Ireland? Why, the artillery would be left utterly without the means of practising. They might have guns to be sure, but they would have no horses, or if they had horses they would have no drivers. The greatest and most serious inconveniences had been felt in former wars, in consequence of not having a regularly trained corps of drivers. When an army went into action, they were forced to get carmen, peasants, or any one they could lay hold of, to act as drivers. What was the consequence? Never having been in a battle, and not being accustomed to discipline, they immediately ran away, and the utmost confusion resulted.—The hon. gentleman had displayed the same ignorance with regard to the sappers and miners. In an economical point of view, there would be no real saving if they were reduced, for they were now employed on various works at an additional 2*s.* 6*d.* per diem, for which civil artificers would be paid 5*s.* 6*d.* In a military point of view their reduction would be still more serious. The only failures which we experienced last war in the Peninsula, were owing to the want of such a corps, or to their being imperfectly trained. Our engineers, in consequence, were exposed to the greatest dangers, especially at Badajoz, where many of them lost their lives, because they were obliged to show the men their duty, even under the very fire of the batteries. With respect to the fortifications at Chatham, he would only refer to the opinion of an eminent officer in the year 1786 upon that subject. He alluded to general Burgoyne (a favourite with the gentlemen opposite), who strenuously supported the propriety at that time of erecting such fortifications. If it were a question whether Chatham should now be fortified, it would be a different point for consideration; but being fortified, he would put it to the House whether they would suffer those fortifications to go to ruin and decay. With respect to Plymouth, upon which a question had been put by an hon. gentleman, he admitted it was a most important subject. He wished to state, however, that the defences which had been erected were not merely in the nature of a wall run round the town: it was a regular fortification flanked with bastions, and having a scarp and counterscarp. He would freely own, however, that unless they went further, all that had yet been done was worth nothing. It must depend, therefore, upon the House of Commons whether the great undertaking should be completed. The sum now asked was merely for the purpose of keeping what was erected from falling into ruin, and he could assure the House that not one hundred pounds should be asked for going on with the fortifications, until parliament should be convinced, after full and mature deliberation, that the object in view was worth the expense that must be incurred. A young member had closed the debate, by talking of the Martellos being unconstitutional. Every thing was now unconstitutional; but he could not really see how these poor towers were so. When he was told the military dress indicated a conspiracy against liberty, he indeed was much afraid, till he recollected that he had himself preserved his old major of volunteer's cloak, and his colonel (a learned judge of the prerogative court) had done the same, and both went home in them at night, and neither of them, he could assure the noble lord (Folkestone) had any design in favour of despotism. As to the Martellos, the hon. member (Mr. Douglas) must have been dreaming, perhaps then talking in his sleep, for he had supposed what never had happened, that he (Mr. Ward) had said it was better to preserve them than to have to build them anew on the commencement of another war. It happened, that neither he, nor any one, had mentioned the Martellos at all; but this he believed, it would cost more to take them down than the materials were worth. The charge was about 12*l.* per tower per annum, and as it was now before the treasury to see whether they might not be available in aid of the revenue, he hoped they might be allowed to remain. Upon the whole, he hoped he had shown there was no reason to oppose any part of the estimates.

Sir *William Lemon* said, he had had the honour of formerly seconding the motion of Mr. Bastard, when the great question of fortifications in the country was lost in that House, by the casting vote of the Speaker.* Looking at their revival since, he would say, that if the lines at Plymouth were to be garrisoned, 20,000 men would be insufficient for that purpose. The matter at length became serious, for if fortifications were to be preserved, we must become a military nation.

Colonel *Palmer* was extremely dissatisfied with the explanation given by the hon. gentleman respecting that department of the ordnance which carried on the manufactory of arms in the Tower. He was informed that 500 stand of small arms were manufactured, even now, every week, which he considered quite unnecessary.

Mr. *Ward* explained, that as the contracts for the manufacture of arms had gone on during the war, it was now necessary to pay for them.

Mr. *Fremantle* observed, that he had often heard persons who were well acquainted with Plymouth, say, that it was a place of public plunder—a place where public money was thrown away in the most extravagant and unjustifiable manner. He trusted that the House would no longer sanction such disgraceful proceedings, but would promptly check such an unnecessary waste of the public resources. He would shortly follow the statement of the hon. member, and he had no hesitation in saying he considered the statement he had submitted to the committee as extremely conclusive against his own cause. He had told the committee, "that as our establishments had increased there was an obvious increase of expenditure." Very well, but did the hon. gentleman forget this was a time of peace? Did he see no difference between the respective establishments of peace and war? Did he think that because a great establishment had necessarily been made in war, there was but little occasion for reducing that establishment in peace? Let him look to the estimates of the ordnance civil department in 1797, which were, on the report of a committee, found to be 51,618*l.*, and let him compare that with the estimates now, which were 84,499*l.* and let him say if any rational being could justify such extravagance.

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* See New Parliamentary History, vol. 25, p. 1114.

He would next look to the original estimates, and first to the article of repairs and contingencies. A more disgraceful waste of public money had never been seen, and yet no explanation was given of it. In these estimates, the contingencies were rated at 258,000*l.*, and when the hon. member had revised them, he cut off 58,000*l.* Now, could any man say, that in drawing up these estimates the hon. gentleman had been actuated by feelings of regard for public economy? The sappers and miners had been very highly extolled, and he had no wish to say any thing to the contrary. But when the hon. member extolled them, he should have thought within himself, whether the people of England were capable of bearing the expense of their continuance in peace? "O," said the hon. gentleman, "I meant to have reduced 10,000*l.* in this part of the estimates." The committee would judge whether he had ever seriously intended to do so, when they consider that the estimates had lain seven weeks on the table without being touched. He believed they would never have been revised, had the hon. gentleman not been forced to do it. Let him not claim the praise of reduction. He had no right to claim any praise. He did not do his duty till he was compelled to do it. And pray where was his claim for praise? He reduced them in March. Very well; but was the country in a better state in March than it was in January? What induced him in January to charge more than he did in March? The fact was, economy was delightful to ministers as a theory, but it terrified them when presented in a practical form.

Sir *J. Newport* said, that whatever diminution had been effected, was owing to the spirited exertions of the people of England, and had been reluctantly wrung from ministers. The hon. member opposite was in a singular dilemma on his own statement, for either he had made at first the most exaggerated demands for public money, or else the diminution of these demands was owing to discussion in the committee. He could easily see the intention of that hon. gentleman and his friends, in their assuming pleasant or talkative moods. When a gentleman on that side of the House said any thing not exactly consonant to the fine feelings of ministers, how did they act? Why, they endeavoured to put him down by ridicule, and to make his arguments ludicrous: "O, he is dreaming, he has been at a debating society, or some club." But when persons who voted always with them spoke, then they were talked to as rational men, and their assertions extolled as profound reasoning [Hear!]. There was a want of decency and fairness of behaviour in this point, which he reprobated as degrading the character of ministers. They opposed ministers because they thought their measures unconstitutional, and on that account ministers wished to make them appear ludicrous in the eyes of the people of England. But Englishmen might trace this diminution of expenditure to their own exertions, and to the downfall of the property tax. He implored the people of this country not to forget their privileges. He implored them to examine rigidly and earnestly every measure of administration, and though motions coming from his side of the House might be lost, yet their object would be gained; for the eyes of the public being opened, ministers would at last be compelled to feel, that though expenditure and extravagance might suit their inclination, yet economy and justice were the principles of our constitution, and that they who slighted those principles were unworthy of the esteem of the public.

Mr. *Newman* concurred in the condemnation of the works at Plymouth, and thought the House much obliged to the hon. gentleman, sir W. Lemon, for calling their attention to this subject.

Mr. *Rose* begged the House to recollect the alarms experienced during the American war on account of the want of fortification at Portsmouth and Plymouth. So great were the apprehensions at that time that the buoys had all been removed. When these circumstances were recollected—when it was also considered that all admirals and general officers had agreed in the necessity of fortifying these two principal harbours, he thought the House would see the necessity of the sums for this purpose.

Mr. *Ward* repeated his explanations, and insisted on the necessity of supporting the sea batteries.

The resolution was then agreed to, and the other items were voted without opposition.

BANK RESTRICTION BILL.] On the motion that the House do resolve itself into a committee of the whole House, to consider of the act 55 Geo. 3rd, c. 28, for further continuing the Restrictions contained in the several acts of his present majesty, on payments of cash by the bank of England,

Mr. *Grenfell* wished to know from the chancellor of the exchequer, at what time he thought the bank would be able to renew its payments in specie?

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer*, as far as he could at present judge, thought that in two years payments in specie might be resumed.

The House then went into the committee.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* restated the reasons which induced him to move for a prolongation of the restriction in cash payments. He thought it would be better to fix the term of the restriction at two years, than to propose one, as in the act then in force; because the latter would give the proposition the air of an annual measure, while the former would hold out the expectation, which he had every reason to believe would prove well founded, that at the expiration of two years the restriction would cease. He therefore moved, That the chairman be instructed to move for leave to bring in a bill to continue the said act for a time to be limited.

Mr. *Grenfell* desired the House to recollect that some time ago the chancellor of the exchequer had mentioned the month of July, 1816, as the time when payments in specie were to be resumed. It seemed to him that there could be no more favourable time for resuming payments in specie than now, when the mint price of bullion, particularly of silver, was the same with the market price. He repeated his opinion that the public should participate in the profits derived by the bank from this act.

Mr. *Ponsonby* also reminded the House that July, 1816, was the period fixed by the chancellor of the exchequer as that at which payments in specie should be resumed. He feared, that at the expiration of the two years now proposed, the chancellor of the exchequer would again come to the House and make a similar proposition.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said:—It is perfectly true, that, during the last session of paliament, I submitted a proposition to the House for a continuance of the bank restriction for one year; but the hopes I then entertained from the continuance of the peace, were soon overcast; and instead of this country receiving a great influx of gold from abroad, we suffered an expenditure of twenty-one millions. But although the external state of the country is now very favourable, we do not enjoy the same advantages in our internal concerns. It is in consequence of this that I propose the restriction for two years, to enable the bank in the present emergency to continue its accommodations. It is impossible for any individual to pledge himself to what may take place in two years, but if affairs remain in their present state, it would require very convincing arguments to induce either me or the House to sanction a continuance of this measure. In answer to the hon. gentleman, he repeated, that it would in his opinion derogate from the honour of parliament and the public, were he by proposing any participation with the bank, to allow it to be inferred, that the country compromised the character of its currency for a pecuniary consideration.

Lord *Folkestone* took the earliest opportunity of protesting against this new measure, proposed with so little explanation, and in a time of peace, when it was to have been expected that the country would have returned to a healthy state of currency. He could not help being persuaded that when the right hon. gentleman concluded the agreement with the bank, by which the bank was to advance a large sum of money to the public, the continuation of the restriction was understood to be one of the conditions of the loan.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* denied the truth of the last assertion made by the noble lord.

Mr. *Grenfell* maintained its truth, in so far as was warranted by the general impression made on the minds of the bank proprietors on the subject.

Lord *Castlereagh* positively declared, that the continuation of the restriction formed no part of the bargain which had been made by government with the bank.

Mr. *J. P. Grant* exposed the dangers which would arise from a repetition (which the profuse issue of paper must occasion) of that revulsion, from the effects of which the country had scarcely yet recovered. Nothing could be more pernicious than thus to keep playing tricks with our currency.

Lord *Castlereagh* observed, that though the exchange was favourable to us at present, care should be taken to avoid any measure that might prevent the gold from flowing in. This, he thought, would be the effect of taking off the bank restriction.

Sir *J. Newport* said, he had long given over the hope of seeing cash payments restored, and the present was another instance of the bad policy of admitting too close a connexion between the government and the bank of England.

Mr. *Ponsonby* represented the evils which would arise from returning to that artificial circulation, which gave to the country the semblance of prosperity, while it was on the verge of bankruptcy.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* thought the right hon. gentleman's apprehensions much exaggerated, if not wholly unfounded. He enlarged on the benefits that would be derived from the act, and referred to the caution with which the bank had hitherto issued their notes, limiting them invariably to the necessity, as an assurance that similar prudence would guide their proceedings for the future.

Lord *Castlereagh* said, the gold currency of this country at the time when we had a mixed circulation, had been stated by lord Liverpool, at the time of passing the restriction, to amount to thirty-two millions. If we required thirty-two millions then, we must require a much larger gold currency now when the wealth and industry of the country were nearly doubled. It would require a considerable time to put the country in possession of so much gold.

Mr. *Grenfell* suggested the propriety of reporting progress, on account of the lateness of the hour and state of the House. He argued that the public ought to participate in the profits of the bank. Seeing the governor of the bank in his place, he wished to ask him, if when the loan of six millions was agreed to, the bank had not proposed the continuation of the restrictions?

Mr. *Mellish*, said the two questions of the loan and the restrictions had never been opened together.

Lord *Folkestone* said, he had no doubt, from the answer of the governor of the bank, it was perfectly understood by the bank that the restrictions were to be continued. The noble lord (Castlereagh) had been mistaken in his authority respecting the thirty-two millions of gold currency at the time of passing the restrictions. The calculation was not made by the late lord Liverpool, but by the present treasurer of the navy, and it always appeared to him erroneous; it was founded on the number of guineas coined in the King's reign up to that time, and made no allowance for those exported or melted down. This, with the twelve millions of notes, made in all forty-four millions, a sum certainly much beyond the truth.

Mr. *J. P. Grant* wished to put the noble lord in mind, that, from the contrivance of bankers and others, a smaller circulation than formerly was now sufficient.

Mr. *Mellish* said, the bank did not ask the restrictions.—It was the House that directed the bank not to pay.

Leave was then given to bring in the Bill.

Assessed Taxes—Husbandry Horse Tax.] In a Committee on the Acts relating to Assessed Taxes, the Chancellor of the Exchequer moved the following Resolutions:

1. "That the duties charged by two several acts of the 48th and 52d years of his present majesty, for and in respect of horses kept for the purpose of husbandry, by any person or persons occupying any farm or estate of the description and value therein mentioned, be suspended for a time to be limited.

2. "That, during such suspension, any person occupying a farm as tenant at rack rent, the rent of which shall be less than 150*l.* a year, and making a livelihood solely thereby, or any person occupying any estate on any other tenure than as tenant at rack-rent solely, or such estate together with a farm, at rack rent, the value of which, in the whole, shall be less than equivalent to a farm at the rack rent of 150*l.* a year, reckoning the value of every estate occupied by the owner thereof, or on any tenure other than as tenant at rack rent, as equivalent to double the amount of the like farm at rack rent, and making a livelihood solely by such estate, or by such estate and farm jointly, for every horse, mare, or gelding, being of the height of thirteen hands or more, of four inches to each hand, *bonâ fide* kept and used solely for the purpose of husbandry, shall be charged the annual sums following; that is to say:—If the farm, estimated as aforesaid, shall be under the value of 70*l.*, the annual sum of three shillings. If the farm, estimated as aforesaid, shall amount to the value of 70*l.* and shall be under the value of 100*l.*, the annual sum of five shillings. And if the farm, estimated as aforesaid, shall amount to the

value of 100*l.*, and shall be under the value of 150*l.*, the annual sum of seven shillings and sixpence."—The Resolutions were agreed to.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday, April 9.

BILL FOR DETAINING NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE.] The House having gone into a committee on the bill for detaining Napoleon Buonaparté in custody.

Lord *Holland* rose:—he said, that, although he might now, he apprehended, without irregularity enter into a discussion of the principle on which this bill was founded, yet he did not mean to avail himself of that privilege any further than to express his surprise at the doctrines maintained last night on the part of the ministers. The noble earl (Bathurst) had contended, that there was an alliance between several powers, if an enemy surrendered himself to one of the powers, he was a prisoner of war, not only to the power to which he surrendered, but also to the rest; and that he was to be treated, not according to the pleasure of that country to which he had surrendered, but of the whole allied powers. Against this doctrine he must strongly protest, as subversive of the principles of public law, and of the independence of nations—and as highly dangerous to the liberties of the subjects of any particular state. If the noble earl had said, that it might be proper in such a case to consult the wishes of the other powers as far as was consistent with a due attention to our own laws, rights, and interests, that perhaps was a proposition from which he might not be disposed to dissent: but to say that a surrender to one of the powers was to be considered as a surrender to the whole, and that the other powers had the same right over the individual surrendering as that power had to which he had surrendered, was a proposition perfectly novel, and directly contrary to the law of nations; and, if enforced by that immense military association of the different powers of Europe which seemed to be gaining ground, would break in upon the municipal law and independence of particular states, and render the subjects of every power subservient, not merely to the control of their own government, but to that of the whole of the other powers. As to the object of the bill itself, he took it to be, to provide merely that Buonaparté should be considered as a prisoner of war notwithstanding the peace, and thus to avoid all questions as to the law, and to suspend the effect of any advantage which Buonaparté might have from the law, if contrary to the enactments of this bill. If that was the meaning, it ought to be distinctly and clearly so stated: but as the bill stood at present, it appeared as if their lordships were legislating in the dark, and therefore something ought to be added to make the meaning of the bill clear and precise. The best mode of carrying into effect the object of those who framed this bill, would be to say, that whatever advantages Buonaparté might have under the existing law, they were to be suspended as to him; and that he was to be considered as a prisoner of war in the same manner as if the war had still continued. As to the preamble of the bill, after the manner in which his noble friend (Lauderdale) had before expressed it, he need say nothing as to that, for he supposed all were agreed that it must be amended.

Earl *Bathurst* did not mean to say, on the occasion to which the noble lord alluded, that, generally speaking, when an enemy surrendered a prisoner of war to one power in alliance with others, he was to be considered as much under the control of the other powers as of that to which he surrendered. Where the army of one power took a territory or town, he did not mean to say generally, that the other powers had the same rights over it, as the power by whose arms it had been taken: but what he had said was this; that, from the particular circumstances of the alliance in the present instance, and the surrender having been the effect of a joint and combined effort directed against Buonaparté personally, he ought, upon his surrender, to be considered, not merely as the prisoner of the power to which he had surrendered, but as the prisoner of all—to this extent at least, that the other powers had a right to interfere with respect to the mode of dealing with that prisoner. The alliance was directed against Buonaparté personally, in order not only to dispossess him of his power, but to prevent his return to power; and the other powers had a right certainly to have some security that the object would be carried into effect. From the nature of this particular alliance, Buonaparté was to be at the disposal of all the allies. This, therefore, was not a question of general law; but the consequence of the nature and object of this particular alliance was, that Buonaparté should be subject to the disposal of all the allied powers together. As to the other point, the noble lord had suggested a mode by which the object of this bill might be accomplished: but if the object was equally well accomplished by the bill as it stood, he saw no reason to object to it, merely because the same thing might be done in another way.

The Earl of *Lauderdale* said, that the doctrine of general law connected with this subject was of more importance than the bill, or even the safe custody of Buonaparté. The doctrines laid down in that House must have an extensive influence, and, therefore, it was of great consequence that no erroneous doctrines should be stated without being contradicted at the time. Now, he defied the noble earl to point out to him any passage in any writer on the law of nations, to show that, let the nature of the alliance be what it might, when an enemy surrendered to one power as a prisoner of war, he was to be considered as much at the disposal of the other powers as of that to which he had surrendered. If, indeed, that were a particular stipulation in the terms of the alliance, and it were publicly declared to be so to all the world, then the individual surrendering must know it, and in surrendering after that notice he must be supposed to have acceded to the terms: but when there was no such public declaration, and the matter rested merely on a private understanding, he surrenders, on the faith of the general law of nations, to one of the powers, and ought to be dealt with by that particular power according to that law. How did the ministers of this country know that he would have surrendered at all, if he had known that it was a surrender even to Austria, notwithstanding his family connexion with that power, or to any of the other powers except Great Britain? He had a right to whatever benefit belonged to him by the law of nations, and could not be, in justice, concluded by the secret stipulations of the allies.

The Earl of *Harrowby* said, that his noble friend had sufficiently explained that the rights of the other powers depended on the nature of this particular alliance, and that questions about the general law of nations were entirely out of place: but then the noble lords opposite turned round and said, that whatever might be the nature of the alliance, the general law ought to prevail, unless there had been a public declaration as to the exception. If they would point out to him in any writer on the law of nations any mention of such an alliance as this, then he would undertake to show that the doctrine contended for by his noble friend was expressly recognised by the law of nations. But, in truth, they were now legislating with reference to a transaction and an alliance which had no parallel in the history of the world, and therefore there could be no precedent applicable to it. But, as the circumstances were altogether new, it was their duty to make a precedent. The noble earl said, that Buonaparté was not bound to know the terms of the alliance, unless they had been publicly declared: but they were publicly declared, and he must have known them. He was, besides, not a free agent in surrendering, for he had only the alternative of so doing, or of being taken by the French government. Now, suppose he had been pursued by a body of Prussian cavalry after the battle of Waterloo, and had been taken by a Prussian hussar, should we have been content, merely because he had fallen into the hands of a Prussian hussar, that Prussia should have the absolute disposal of him? The very object of the alliance was, to remove him from his power, and to prevent his return to it; and it was for this purpose that a million of men had marched. It was by the combined effort that he was driven to the surrender; and all had the right of disposal of him. The object was not the safety of any particular power, but the safety of all; and all had a right to interfere in the disposal of him: and even if they had not claimed that right, we ought voluntarily to have bound ourselves to deal with him, so as to put it out of our own power, even in extreme cases, to commit felony against the peace of Europe.

Lord *Holland* said, that it was argued, first, that the case stood on its own peculiar grounds, and that the circumstances were without parallel in history; and the noble earl said, if a similar case were shown in any writer on the law of nations, he would undertake to show, that the law was such as the ministers contended for. He, on his part, would ask the noble earl to point him out any proceeding mentioned in history, contrary to the general principles of the law of nations, where those who so violated the law did not defend themselves on the ground of the particular circumstances of the case? Amidst all the charges—some of them well founded, and others unfounded—preferred against this very individual by this country for violations of the law of nations, were there not men in his councils who were prepared with the ever-ready defence, that the particular case had nothing to do with general law, but depended on its own circumstances? As to the observation of another noble earl, that he had suggested one mode, and that another was adopted in the bill, he could not see how that was an answer to what he had stated, unless it were assumed that the one mode was as good as the other, which was the very question at issue.

The preamble was postponed; some proposed verbal amendments in the clauses were agreed to, and others negatived.

Lord *Holland*, adverting to that part of the bill which enacted that Buonaparté should be treated as a prisoner of war, under such restrictions as should seem proper, said, that the restrictions had been inserted, as was alleged, with a view to enable the Crown to treat Buonaparté with more lenity than was consistent with the situation of a prisoner of war. Now, he wished to ask what lenity could be shown to Buonaparté under this bill, that might not be shown, by virtue of the prerogative, to Buonaparté considered as a prisoner of war? The restrictions were in that view unnecessary, and he moved that they be left out; because they might be considered as empowering the Crown to impose greater hardships than it could on a mere prisoner of war.

This motion was negatived, but the lord chancellor agreed to consider the clause again.

The Earl of *Lauderdale*, adverting to that part of the bill which went to provide against the escape of Buonarparté, said, that if a captain of a ship found Buonaparté on the high sea in a boat just ready to sink, and took him into his ship, he must, by this bill, under pain of death, proceed to St. Helena with him, or to the place from which Buonaparté last came. This could not be the intention of the framers of the bill; and he proposed an amendment, by which any captain of a ship, or other person, finding Buonaparté on the high sea, should be exempt from the penalty, if he proceeded *bonâ fide* to deliver him up to the authorities of this country, in any quarter most convenient for such captain, &c.

The *Lord Chancellor* said, the meaning could not be considered such as the noble earl stated it to be.

The amendment was negatived.

The Earl of *Lauderdale* objected to the hardship that a person should be immediately sent to Great Britain for trial, if charged with assisting in Buonaparté's escape.

When the clauses were gone through,

Lord *Holland* proposed to add to the bill a proviso, that nothing in the bill contained should extend to deprive Buonaparté of any of the civil rights which he enjoyed under the existing law; and that no subject should be allowed to plead that he was an alien enemy, unless he had the benefit of that plea independently of this bill.

The *Lord Chancellor* did not see any good reason for adding this proviso.

The committee divided upon the question, that these words be added—Contents, 5: Not Contents, 10. The amendment was therefore negatived.

The preamble, which was admitted to be liable to the objection stated to it the night before by the earl of Lauderdale, was then amended, and the bill passed the committee.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, April 9.

PRINCESS CHARLOTTE'S ESTABLISHMENT BILL.] On the motion for going into a committee of the whole House upon the Bill for better enabling his Majesty to make provision for the establishment of her royal highness the princess Charlotte Augusta, and his serene highness Leopold George Frederick, duke of Saxe, margrave of Meissen, landgrave of Thuringuen, prince of Cobourg of Saalfield,

Mr. *Brooke* wished to know, whether, if any embarrassments or arrears regarding the princess's previous establishment should exist, this income was to be clogged with their liquidation? This, he thought, ought not to be, but that her royal highness should be enabled to come into public life perfectly free from any incumbrance whatever. He alluded to former grants made for the establishment of different branches of the royal family, which not being adequate to the discharge of previous incumbrances, as well as to support the splendour for which they were granted, left these illustrious personages surrounded by difficulties which they had never been able to overcome. The House ought, on this occasion, to take care that there should be no debt arising from the outfit, which might diminish the annuity intended to be granted. A full and sufficient sum ought to be granted to prevent any accident of this kind.

Mr. *Lushington* said, he believed it was fully understood, from the former statement of his right hon. friend, that the sum agreed to for the outfit would be fully adequate to the purpose.

Sir *Robert Heron* observed, that wishing to be perfectly liberal towards her royal highness, as the House and the country ought to be, he had acceded to all the propositions that ministers had brought forward hitherto in her behalf; but he would not agree to any thing farther. He was of opinion that any thing beyond what had been proposed would be exceedingly improper; and he hoped her royal highness and her intended husband would confine their expenses within what had been granted by the liberality of parliament. This liberality was no new feature; it had been amply and sufficiently shown at all times, and towards every member of the royal family, and what was granted ought to be abided by. He had therefore never voted for any sum to liquidate arrears which could not be justified; nor would he, as long as he lived, ever give a vote for the payment of one farthing of the debts of any prince, or minister alive or dead [Hear, hear!].

The House then went into a committee, and on the resolutions for granting the annuity being read.

Mr. *Brougham* desired a clause to be read respecting the annuity; it was accordingly read, when it was proposed to fill up a blank with the words 60,000*l.* Mr. Brougham said he had not the smallest desire to make any objections to the proposition; but he wished to know in what form the annuity was to be paid. According to the chancellor of the exchequer's statement on a former evening, her royal highness's establishment had already cost at the rate of 30,000*l.* a year, chiefly from the civil list. He had understood that her royal highness was to have 60,000*l.* a year, but then he supposed that to be 30,000*l.* additional to the civil list 30,000*l.* Otherwise 30,000*l.* a year would be added by a side-wind to the civil list. He considered this as a question of the last importance as it regarded the civil list, and it was highly necessary that the subject should be well understood.

Mr. *Lushington* felt no difficulty in stating, that the sum of 60,000*l.* would cover her royal highness's whole expenditure; the 30,000*l.* in the civil list, would, of course, be devoted to meet any excess in that department.

Mr. *Brougham* repeated his former question, and observed, that if the amount of the civil list were inadequate to the charges it bore, parliament would be applied to for the deficiency. If the civil list required an addition, let it be fairly and openly applied for; let it not be done by a side wind [Hear!]. It was with the greatest difficulty he brought himself to say a word on this subject, lest he should be misrepresented by any whisper of his being wanting in respect to the illustrious person in question, or in concurring in that universal homage which he, in common with that House and the country, was eager to pay to the auspicious match connected with this consideration. But it was for the House to take care that in giving 60,000*l.* annually to her royal highness, they were not also giving 30,000*l.* a year to the civil list.

Mr. *Law* entered into some explanations, to show that the additional grant to the civil list, on account of the princess Charlotte's separate establishment, as it now existed, was only 6,000*l.* and not 30,000*l.* [No, no!].

Mr. *Lushington* repeated, that the impression was, that the grant from the civil list, would cease after passing this act; and of course would no longer be a public charge.

Mr. *Brougham* conceived that his own statement now appeared right: 30,000*l.* a year, in one way or other, it was said, had been paid for her royal highness from the privy purse and the civil list. Taking the establishment at 60,000*l.* a year, certainly many gentlemen supposed it to be only an addition of 30,000*l.* a year to the public for the establishment of the princess Charlotte and the prince of Cobourg.

Sir *M. W. Ridley* thought it followed of course, that there would be the addition mentioned to the civil list.

Mr. *Lushington* said, the bill only pledged parliament to provide the 60,000*l.* a year. The 30,000*l.* ceased as far as it related to the princess, and, if the House chose, might also cease as it regarded the public: but this was not at all the question before the House.

Mr. *Brougham* insisted, that this consideration was not necessary. Parliament had granted a certain sum for the civil list, on which there was a charge of 30,000*l.* a year for the maintenance of the princess Charlotte. That 30,000*l.* ceased from this day. How did it cease? By parliament granting 30,000*l.* more, which took that charge away from the list. This was as plain and self-evident as that 30 and 30 made 60. But by granting 60,000*l.* without an understanding or proposition for this reduction, we were in fact granting 30,000 more to the civil list.

Mr. *W. Dundas* thought the House ought to confine itself to what was immediately before it. By voting the 60,000*l.* he could not see how the House was pledged to give the 30,000*l.* to the civil list.

Mr. *Calcraft* thought it was due to the dignity of the House for the right hon. gentleman to have been in his place on this occasion [Neither the chancellor of the exchequer nor lord Castlereagh had yet come down]. He had listened for a long while to the hon. gentleman opposite, in hopes of some explanation from him; but he had left him more puzzled than when he began his observations. The question was quite clear. It was, whether this marriage was to cost the public 60,000*l.* a year, or 30,000*l.* additional? We were going to vote 60,000*l.*, which would be 30,000*l.* additional. The hon. gentleman said, the 30,000*l.* reverted to the civil list. The committee knew this well enough; but he would say, that instead of reverting to the civil list, it ought to revert to the public. The House was not to be put off by what the hon. gentleman had said about future discussion; now was the time to discuss the subject. An hon. gentleman had attempted to set the committee right, by saying that the proportion of 6000*l.* and upwards, would revert to the public; but this was only one-fifth of what they ought to regain, as could clearly be proved [Here lord Castlereagh entered the House]. He was sorry the noble lord opposite was not in the House at the commencement of the discussion, as he might have thrown some light upon the subject. He would repeat, in a few words, for his information, what had occurred. We were about to make a grant of 60,000*l.*, by which 30,000*l.* became no longer a charge on the civil list. The question was, what was to become of this 30,000*l.*? How was its reversion to be left at liberty, to be secured to the public?

Lord *Castlereagh* said, that in providing the means for the establishment of her royal highness, various expenses had been necessarily incurred in different departments of the household, which would now be relieved from that extraordinary charge. The whole amount of these might have been from 22 to 23,000*l.* a year; but the change that would now take place, was not such an augmentation of the civil list as could require the interference of parliament. The civil list had evidently been considered for some years past as inadequate to its objects; but all interference on this subject had been abstained from during a time of war, because it found relief from droits of admiralty and other sources. The effect of the present bill would be to relieve the different household departments. The general affairs of the civil list would come under discussion in the course of the present session, when parliament would have time to consider them.

Mr. *Curwen* observed, that the noble lord had stated pretty roundly, that the civil list was not adequate to the expenses. But he would ask the noble lord, if, in these times of distress and misery, the Prince Regent, if he wished to hold a place in the hearts of his people, could come to the House and ask for an increase in the civil list? [Hear, hear!] In fact, no man who really wished that the royal family should stand in the hearts of the people, could feel any other sensation than that of deep regret, that there should, at such a time, be any arrears of the civil list. Even admitting that only 6000*l.* ought to revert to the public, to overlook this would be most censurable. We had been told of the great retrenchments that had been made in the public expenditure; but no credit was due to ministers on this account; they had only performed a part of their duty, which circumstances rendered imperiously necessary. Did these retrenchments altogether bear any proportion to the amount of the distresses of the country, or were they in any proportion to what must absolutely be made, if the country was to be saved from bankruptcy? If it was to be saved, it must be by the retrenchment of millions. He hoped the hon. and learned gentleman who had made the observations which had led to this discussion, would persevere; for such proceedings as he had witnessed were a total abandonment of that system of economy which had been held out in the speech from the throne.

Mr. *Lushington* declared, that if he had thought his right hon. friend, the chancellor of the exchequer, would have arrived in time to participate in the discussion, he should not have had the presumption to say a word upon the subject. But it was necessary that the bill should pass; and he could not conceive the House to be pledged in any respect as to the 30,000*l.* when the civil list came hereafter under consideration.

Mr. *Calcraft* thought this bill ought not to have been moved in the absence of the right hon. gentleman [The chancellor of the exchequer at this time entered the House]. The only charge that was recognized was that of 6500*l.* on the civil list, and it would be well to see that in this bill that sum were deducted.

Mr. *Lushington* said, that the bill provided for the deduction of that sum, and moved that one of the clauses be read.

Mr. *Brougham* contended that this sum signified nothing. It only made it appear that there was 23,500*l.* instead of 30,000*l.*, which was not to cease, and the question was, what was to become of the remainder? The subject stood just as it was, only that we found we were now granting 23,500*l.* to the civil list, instead of 30,000*l.*

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that not having heard the whole of the discussion, he was not quite sure that he understood the subject. The arrangement stated by him was, that his royal highness should receive the 60,000*l.* in lieu of every allowance whatever, as an annual income, from the consolidated fund.—Her royal highness receiving this sum, and having an entire, an exclusive establishment of her own, a saving would necessarily be effected in the civil list, to the amount of nearly 23,500*l.* There would be a saving in the several departments of the household and the master of the horse, in consequence of this new establishment, which was formerly charged upon the civil list, which would undoubtedly be relieved from any excess of expense on her royal highness's account. The saving effected, on the income hitherto appropriated to the Princess, would thus be about 7000*l.*, and in the civil list it would be almost 30,000*l.*, but which made no part of the estimates laid before the House in the present year.

Mr. *Tierney* observed, that by the estimates before the committee, the lord steward's department was to be charged 12,000*l.*, and the master of the horse 10,000*l.*, making the estimates to go only to 22,000*l.* in the whole, and that the balance of the 30,000*l.* was to be defrayed from the consolidated fund. He did not like the idea of going to the consolidated fund, as sums once put on it, were not so easily got off again. He thought, in conformity to old established customs, which by-the-bye, would now be treated as exploded, that that sum should still remain on the civil list, and then be paid to the consolidated fund, as had been done in the case of the princess of Wales. With respect to Camelford House, he wished to know whether the rent of that House was to be paid out of this grant, or was to be a separate charge? [Yes, from lord Castlereagh] Her royal highness was certainly worthy of a high establishment, as heir apparent to the throne, and he did not think the place chosen for her residence was at all suitable to her dignity. He objected to her being kept thus in a private situation, and on that account thought her allowance of 60,000*l.* was too great. It was right she should have an adequate allowance, corresponding to her dignity, but when she was to be kept as a private person, he thought the proposed sum too large [Hear!]. As heir apparent to the throne, it was proper she should hold drawing rooms, for the purpose of meeting with her subjects, over whom she was destined to reign, and he deprecated the conduct of ministers in keeping her in a private rank. He had suggested the propriety of granting her the ordnance office as a very proper town residence. The House now selected for her residence, was extremely inadequate, and really to small, and he on that account considered 60,000*l.* a too great allowance to her while she inhabited such a place. He knew very well this would give offence to some persons, and that he should be termed niggardly. But he wished ministers to inform the committee, whether it was intended to allow her to hold drawing rooms [The righ hon. member supposing a motion of dissent was made by ministers proceeded]. He certainly thought ministers had brought their master into a very fine situation by the humiliating manner in which they proposed to use his royal daughter [Hear!]. Her royal highness was the heir apparent to the throne, and no person could question her right of succession to it, yet with an inconsistency altogether unaccountable, she was to be kept aloof from all the distinctions of royalty [Hear!]. The noble lord in his usual manner, would probably give no satisfactory answer to the committee why this was done. The best way the committee in that case could do, was to give him no money. It was as easy for them to hold their purse, as it was for him to hold his tongue [A laugh]. He deprecated the privacy to which her royal highness seemed doomed, and considered it inconsistent with every principle of the constitution [Hear, hear!].

Lord *Castlereagh* was astonished at the manner in which the right hon. gentleman had conducted himself. He went on in a fine manner, putting questions, looking to the countenance of those opposite to him, and supposing he had been answered. On these supposed answers, he dwelt with his usual vehemence, quite in a dramatic style, telling the committee, if he got no answer he would give no money. However congenial that mode might be to the feelings of the right hon. gentleman, he (lord C.) declined acting any part in the comedy. But he asked the committee, whether it was consistent with their dignity, after having once granted a sum, and gone to the foot of the throne with the warmest assurances of their support, now to retrench the provision they had granted? He need scarcely put this question, as he knew no man in the committee would be guilty of such inconsistency [Hear!].—His right hon. friend (the chancellor of the exchequer), had stated to the committee, that 60,000*l.* a-year was all he was authorized to ask, and that a proposition would hereafter be laid before them for providing a suitable mansion for the residence of the illustrious individuals. Her royal highness, and her intended consort, had expressed their intention to pay for the town residence, and if any provision for a mansion was made by the House, they would rather have that in the country. He (lord C.) had no instruction to give any communication to the House, respecting what would be the situation of the illustrious individuals after marriage, and he deprecated the conduct of the right hon. gentleman, as savouring too much of a disposition he always had of making insinuations.

Mr. *Tierney* was not surprised at the last words of the noble lord's speech. He had asked a simple question, and had been charged by the noble lord with acting a dramatical part. But he repeated what he had formerly said, namely, that the noble lord had not done his duty as he ought to have done. There was a kind of quibbling peculiar to ministers, which the committee could not but remark. If the question which was put to them was suited to their inclinations, then an immediate answer was given; but if it was not congenial, they then either held their peace, or poured a torrent of illiberal abuse on members opposite. But he would tell the noble lord, that any idea of a country house was not to be entertained while we had so many palaces. He warned the country against the designs of the noble lord, which were a monstrous insult to their feelings. It was really very amusing to hear ministers say, that they could not find a palace in good order enough for their royal highnesses, and that therefore a new mansion must be provided [Hear!]. What was become of the expensive cottage at Windsor? Was it already out of repair? Could Cranbourne Lodge not be fitted up? He was ashamed to go over the number of palaces we had in this country, and to hear the noble lord have the presumption to say, that a new and better accommodation than they can furnish must be had. Had the noble lord no regard whatever for the feelings of the country? Did he suppose that the public were no longer awake to any hardship imposed on them, and that they had totally lost every kind of sensibility? No man was more willing than himself to grant every provision which was requisite for the comfort and happiness of the royal family. His anxiety on this occasion led him decidedly to condemn the privacy to which her royal highness was doomed. But the more he examined the state of public matters, the more he was convinced of the truth of the old proverb, "the more money, the less show." Drawing-rooms and public court days had become now very rare, notwithstanding the immense sums devoted to the expenses of the court. He condemned the proposal of ministers for a country residence, as most indecent; and while he professed the most profound respect for her royal highness, he considered the house which had been chosen for her residence was ill-suited to her dignity, and that she was now to be reduced to a rank inconsistent with the views of the heir presumptive to the throne.

Mr. *Abercrombie* declared, that since

that House had met as a house of parliament, both the House and the country had never been so directly insulted as they had just been by the noble lord. The marriage of her royal highness the princess Charlotte being about to take place, parliament were called upon to make a provision for her royal highness, in her new situation. Legally speaking, her royal highness was certainly only heiress presumptive to the throne. But it was unnecessary to state, the various circumstances, some of them dependent on acts of the legislature, which gave to the rank of her royal highness in the state a very different character. Then, when the noble lord was asked in what way her royal highness was henceforward to be considered—whether she was to conduct herself as a private individual, or as heiress presumptive to the throne, he told the House, that they had no business to inquire about the matter. But that House had an unquestionable right to inquire into, and to be told every thing relating to it. And when the noble lord asked them for 60,000*l.* a year, as an establishment for her royal highness, without being prepared, or refusing to give an answer to the questions which had been put to him, with respect to the state which her royal highness was to maintain, he insulted the House and the country. If her royal highness was not to be considered as heiress presumptive, why was she to have more than any younger son of the King? If she was to live in privacy, why was the establishment for her royal highness and the prince of Cobourg, to be larger than that for the duke and duchess of Cumberland? It was a new doctrine, that such an inquiry as that had been made, was an improper interference with the private and domestic life of a member of the royal family.

Lord *Castlereagh* really submitted it to the judgment of the committee, whether it was possible for him to give the information required of him. All that he could say on the subject was, that her royal highness the princess Charlotte stood in the situation in which the law had placed her, and that whatever sum the liberality of parliament chose to bestow upon her, was in her royal highness's hands to dispose of at her own discretion.

Mr. *Brougham*, in reply to the statement of the noble lord, that her royal highness stood in the situation in which the law had placed her, asked why it was proposed to give her royal highness 60,000*l.* instead of 20,000*l.* a year, unless her royal highness was in a very different situation in fact from what she was in law? On any other ground it would be preposterous to treat her royal highness so differently from the other branches of her illustrious family. It was in vain to disguise the circumstance, but the House well knew that it was more than a thousand to one that her royal highness would succeed to the Crown, and therefore that in point of substance and fact she was as much to be considered heiress apparent to the crown of these realms, as if she were so in law. There could be no other pretence for coming to parliament for a splendid, though not too splendid, establishment for her royal highness. He again and again repeated, that he had no wish to impede the measure before the House, or to throw the slightest obstacle in the way of that most happy and auspicious matrimonial union, which had his hearty approbation and concurrence. But the House would be guilty of a dereliction of duty, were they to vote the money of the country, without ascertaining that the interests of the country were to be consulted in its expenditure. The noble lord had said, that he did not know whether her royal highness intended to hold a court or not. But did the noble lord mean to say, that if he were to put that question in another quarter, he would not obtain a satisfactory answer? To him it was perfectly evident, that if her royal highness was to hold a court, as she ought to do, for the reception of the subjects over whom she was destined one day to rule, the arrangements would not have been made which had been made respecting Camelford house. He wished to speak with the greatest respect of that house [a laugh], but although it was a residence highly fitting the noble person who was going out of it, it was by no means a palace fit for the residence of the heiress of the British crown. A lease had been obtained of this house for seven years, at a rent of 2,500*l.* a year. It was quite clear, that in that house her royal highness could hold no court, but must reside as a private member of the royal family. It appeared very extraordinary to him, but it was now discovered, that the expenses of her royal highness's present establishment, which was of a most private nature, which was attended with less pomp and show than any other of the royal establishments, with less pomp and show than nine out of ten of the establishments of the nobility—and he was afraid with less convenience than ninety-nine out of a hundred of the latter. It now appeared that this establishment, so private, so devoid of pomp and show and convenience, had cost 37,000*l.* a year; for it was stated, that besides the 30,000*l.* paid for it out of the civil list, 7,000*l.* more came from the consolidated fund: 60,000*l.* was talked of for an establishment that should have somewhat ostensible, somewhat of splendour about it. Why, twice 60,000*l.* would not be enough on that scale. It was a perfect joke to propose such a thing. Things, indeed, must be much cheaper even than they were to permit it. Unless the grossest extravagance and waste had prevailed in that branch of the civil list, he meant the existing establishment of her royal highness, an extravagance and waste that outdid all the outdoings in the other branches of it, the proposal of 60,000*l.* for her royal highness's future establishment, under circumstances of so very different a nature, was utterly inadequate. Feeling so strongly as he did on this subject, however painful the duty, and however unwilling he was to throw the slightest difficulty in the way of the arrangement which had taken place, or to interfere at all in a matter of so delicate a nature, he should certainly take the sense of the House on the question that the chairman should report progress, in order that the committee might better understand the subject when it next came before them, and that the noble lord might make such inquiries in the proper quarter, as would enable him to give them the information which it was, in his opinion, so indispensable to obtain.

The Amendment proposed by Mr. Brougham, having been read by the chairman,

Mr. *Methuen* said, that as the House had unanimously voted the sum of 60,000*l.* for the annual establishment of her royal highness the princess Charlotte, he thought the country had a right to expect that every sixpence now paid for her royal highness's establishment from the civil list and consolidated fund, should be cleared off. Whether or not this was the case, the House and the public had a right to know. As to the way in which the money was to be expended, although a certain degree of splendour appeared to be a matter of fair expectation, yet he conceived that it must be entirely at her royal highness's own discretion and option, whether or not to hold a court.

Lord *Castlereagh*, in reply to the first part of the hon. member's observations, said that his right hon. friend, when he had made the original proposition, which was the foundation of the bill before the committee, distinctly stated that the 60,000*l.* to be granted to her royal highness, was in lieu of all other grants from what quarter soever proceeding.

Mr. *Methuen* wished to know, whether he was nevertheless to understand that the charges were to remain on the civil list?

Lord *Castlereagh*. Clearly.

Mr. *Methuen*. Then I shall certainly vote for the hon. and learned gentleman's amendment.

Lord *Castlereagh* said, that the hon. gentleman must misunderstand him. None of the existing charges on the consolidated fund or civil list would accrue to her royal highness after her marriage, but only the precise income which the present bill went to secure to her.

Lord *Milton* asked, if those charges would be saved to the public?

Lord *Castlereagh* replied, that that part of her royal highness's present income which arose out of the consolidated fund would revert to that fund—that part which proceeded from the civil list would be employed in the public service. In allusion to a statement from an hon. and learned gentleman, with respect to the expense of her royal highness's existing establishment, he thought it would not be considered extravagant, when it was considered that all persons in attendance on her royal highness were paid out of it—her ladies, her equerries, her masters for the various branches of education, &c.

Sir *M. W. Ridley* recalled the question to the attention of the committee. The bill before them granted 60,000*l.* a year to the princess Charlotte. The 7,000*l.* now paid to her royal highness out of the consolidated fund would of course merge in that sum. But the 23,000*l.* now paid out of the civil list, although not henceforward to be given to her royal highness, would continue a charge on the public purse. The bill, therefore, added 23,000*l.* a year to the civil list. Now this was a subject which ought to be separately and distinctly discussed. If the addition was actually necessary, let the proposition be brought before parliament, but let it not be mingled with the question now before the committee.

Mr. *Lyttelton* felt the utmost reluctance to obstruct the progress of the bill. The grant of 60,000*l.* to her royal highness was made unanimously, but it was not intended indirectly to vote 23,000*l.* annually to the civil list. He was persuaded that the nation was as unanimous in reprobating the excesses of the civil list as parliament had been in voting the proposed establishment to her royal highness the princess Charlotte.

Mr. *Forbes* thought that provision might be made in the bill, to prevent the 23,000*l.* from remaining a part of the civil list.

Mr. *Wynn* regretted that a necessity existed for any discussion calculated to disturb the unanimity which it was so desirable to manifest on the present occasion. But in what confidence did the House of Commons vote the address by which they granted 60,000*l.* a year to her royal highness the princess Charlotte? In the confidence that her royal highness was to fill the situation of heir apparent to the throne. It was only in that confidence that parliament had been justified to their constituents in making a provision for her royal highness, which, though not too much in that case, would be too much in any other. The noble lord said, that this would be for the private consideration of her royal highness. It was a public concern. If that House granted public money, they could grant it only for public purposes. Those to whom it was granted ought to support the state which became them. All who wished that the dignity and honour of the royal family should be maintained, were interested in declaring, that this 60,000*l.* ought not to be spent privately, but ought to be devoted to the support of that state which it would be proper for her royal highness to assume. If by this bill 23,000*l.* was to be deducted from the charges of the civil list, leaving that sum to be applied to other purposes, then it was fitting that the country should be told, that half the proposed grant was for her royal highness the princess Charlotte, and the other half for his royal highness the Prince Regent. Adverting to the statement made by the noble lord, of the expenses attendant on her royal highness's existing establishment, he observed, that he had always understood the ladies in attendance on her royal highness had no salaries; which must be a mistake, as the noble lord had characterised those salaries as forming a material item of her royal highness's expenditure.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* allowed that the present bill would relieve the civil list to the amount stated. By the act of the 53d George 3d, parliament had, on the average of several years, recognised the annual deficiency of the civil list as 124,000*l.* Therefore although the civil list would be relieved to the amount of 6000*l.*, a deficiency would still be left of 118,000*l.*

Mr. Brougham's amendment was negatived without a division. The bill then went through the committee, and the report was received. On the question that the bill be read a third time,

General *Fergusson* asked the noble lord, whether, when the electorate of Hanover was raised to the rank of a kingdom, any alteration had been made in the succession? The House was aware that females were excluded from succeeding to the electorate.

Lord *Castlereagh* replied, that no alteration had been made on that subject.

The bill was then read a third time and passed.

Bill for the Registering of Deeds, &c.] Mr. Serjeant Onslow moved for leave to bring in a bill "to amend the acts passed in the parliament of England in the reign of William and Mary, and in the parliament of Ireland, during the reign of queen Anne, to protect creditors from fraudulent devises."—Leave granted.

Mr. Serjeant *Onslow* then rose to move for leave to bring in a bill "for the public registering of all conveyances, wills, and incumbrances that shall be made of, or that may affect any honors, manors, lands, tenements, or hereditaments, within the several counties of England and Wales, except the counties of Middlesex and York." The advantage of the system of registry was well known from the instances of Yorkshire and Middlesex, where it now prevailed. The first place where it was adopted was the West Riding of Yorkshire and the two other Ridings of that county, and the county of Middlesex had been so convinced of the utility of the system, that they had obtained the same benefit by special acts. His object now was to extend the system to the whole kingdom. The system which he should attempt to introduce would not allow an impertinent curiosity to be satisfied by an inspection of the deeds themselves. The dates of the deeds, the uses, the names of the witnesses, and the places where they were deposited only would be registered. It would thus be in the power of a purchaser to demand the inspection of the deeds respecting the property, before he completed the purchase, and he would be enabled to ascertain whether all those deeds had been exhibited to him. The measure which he proposed would diminish the number of suits, secure titles, and render it more easy to raise money on mortgage; for it was well known that in York and Middlesex money was more easily raised in this manner than in other counties. He concluded by moving for leave to bring in his bill.

Mr. *Croker* stated the registry law of Ireland to have proved most beneficial to that country. The hon. and learned gentleman, therefore, had not only the experience of the counties of Middlesex and York in favour of his proposition, but that of the whole country of Ireland. Than such a measure as this he knew of nothing more necessary in a country so far advanced in civilization as England. Nothing could open a wider door to fraud than the secrecy with which it had been common to conclude transfers and mortgages of property in our time. Formerly they were more public, and the form of the document anciently in common use, which began with the words, "Know all men," proved it was not always thought necessary that such transactions should be secret. He objected to the clause which the bill was to contain for making wills public.

Mr. *Preston* declared himself decidedly hostile to the measure, and did not consider the argument drawn from the operation of such a law in Ireland to be applicable to the state of this country. He should always object to a system which enabled extravagant sons to gratify their curiosity on the subject of the property to which they might be heirs. The registry in Yorkshire appeared to him in the light of a complete nuisance, because, from its extent and multiplicity, it was impossible for any purchaser to derive satisfactory information from it. He felt persuaded that the effect of this measure, if it should pass into a law, although it might be productive of some convenience at first, would in the course of 30 years throw all the titles in the kingdom into confusion. The proposition of the learned serjeant was likewise open to other objections, inasmuch as it left it to the option of the counties whether they would have the registry or not. The enactment, if it should be adopted, ought to be universal, or we should speedily have a different law in every different county.

Sir *F. Flood* was astonished to hear the observations which had been urged by the hon. and learned gentleman who had just sat down, against an honest, fair bill, brought in to protect the property of the country. The most beneficial effects had been experienced from the registry law of Ireland. He was confident such a measure would be not less advantageous to England. Had such a law been in force, many fatal consequences which had occurred would have been prevented. In one instance which had come to his knowledge, a gentleman carrying the whole of his title deeds with him from his attorney, had in his hurry left them in a hackney-coach. The coachman drove off, and on finding a parcel left behind had opened it, in the hope of finding something immediately negociable. Disappointed in this, and vexed at the parcel containing no Bank paper, he had destroyed all the writings. A family had thus been ruined, which would have been saved from such a calamity, had registries been established in England as they were in Ireland. He did not conceive any serious inconvenience could arise from the bill now proposed to be brought in. No person acting an honest part, could with reason feel ashamed of the arrangements he might deem it necessary to make with his own property, and the arrangement which would now be made, would effectually prevent many from being plundered who would else be cheated out of their money.

Mr. Serjeant *Onslow* observed, that the question upon the registry of wills was but a subordinate part of the measure, which would be most advantageously discussed in the committee. It had been said by an hon. and learned gentleman (Mr. Preston), that the bill would cause confusion: to this he should only answer, that its object was to prevent it, and that he knew nothing which should impede the accomplishment of this object. In one point of view, indeed, it might operate personally with regard to the hon. and learned gentleman, for he believed it would have a great tendency to lessen his professional avocations. It gave him pleasure, however, to reflect that the hon. and learned gentleman would thus be enabled to devote a greater portion of his time to those studies upon agriculture and the commutation of tithes, which he had so often detailed to an admiring and attentive House [A laugh].

The bill was then brought in and read a first time.

Committee on the Distressed State of Agriculture.] Mr. *Western* moved the order of the day for the House resolving itself into a committee, to take into further consideration the agricultural distresses of the country. On account of the thin attendance he did not feel himself disposed to urge that the House should go into the committee that evening. Unless the business of the House would permit them to go into a full consideration of the subject at this time, the discussion would hardly be attended with advantage to the country. Knowing that there was a pressure of business that night, and that there was not that disposition in the House which could allow him to expect they would devote their full attention to a subject of such paramount importance, he should throw himself on their determination whether he ought to proceed in moving the committee, or postpone the consideration of the question till after the recess. He should have hoped certainly, that the House would have given the most persevering attention to the consideration of this subject; but whether from the pressure of business, or from whatever other cause, the House had not given that attention to it which he could have wished.

Lord *Castlereagh* appealed to the House, if either his colleagues or himself had ever absented themselves on any occasion when this question came forward. He hoped the late pressure of business might account in part for the inadequate attendance at present; but he also hoped, that so much had already been done in the spirit of the measures suggested by the hon. gentleman, that the anxiety of the members was on that account considerably abated as to the result. He thought it would be advisable to keep the committee alive, in order that after the holidays they might again give their attention to the question.

Mr. *J. P. Grant* thought it desirable that the subject should be postponed, in the then state of the House. After the holidays, he hoped ministers would be prepared to come forward with some practical plan of their own, for the relief of the distress complained of. This they ought to have taken upon themselves to do before. From the information they had, they might be able to do this better than a committee. It was most important that something should be done. It was important, not merely to the individuals whose distress was now the subject of regret, but to the whole landed interest.

Mr. *Brand* concurred with the last speaker, in the view which he took of the importance of this subject. After the recess, they would come to it with a knowledge of the effect produced by what had already been done.

Sir *J. Newport* thought, if the general question were postponed till after the recess, that it would be well to appoint a committee to investigate the question on wool and seeds. He was of opinion, this would be of great service to enable them to view the subject in all its bearings.

Lord *Castlereagh* had no objection to the committee proposed being now appointed, but he wished to state the impression on his mind to be at present against imposing any protecting duties on the importation of wool and seeds. Our manufacturers had heretofore been perhaps protected by duties, more than they ought to have been even for their own interest. This system pursued, would have forced all the capital into the hands of the manufacturing interest, to the ruin of the agricultural interest. It was proper to take a middle course, and to let the capital take its proper destination equally between them. On this principle he had supported the corn bill. Having done this, he had thought it right to give moderate encouragement to the manufacturers of cheese and butter, as it certainly could not be for the interest of the country, that by favouring the growth of corn alone, the farmer should be tempted to break up ground for the culture of it, which might be better fitted to produce other commodities. Though disposed thus to give every reasonable protection to the agricultural interest, he was not willing to lay duties on the importation of articles which entered largely into our manufactures. Considerations thus might arise on the question respecting the importation of wool and seeds, which might overpower

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those suggested by the claims set up for the agricultural interest. He wished to act fairly between the manufacturing and the landed interests, and to guard against one gaining a monopoly over the other.

Mr. *S. Thornton* approved of the postponement, and the appointment of a committee up stairs.

Mr. *Long Wellesley* congratulated the House and the country on the sentiments which had just fallen from the noble lord. The agriculturists wished merely to be put on a footing with the other classes of the community. He thought it advisable that the question should be postponed till after the recess, in order that it should receive the fullest discussion.

Mr. *Gordon* disapproved of the postponement of the question. The House was usually thin about the present period of the evening, and he had no doubt that many members would soon come down, who were desirous of taking a part in the discussion. He was desirous of putting two questions to the chancellor of the exchequer on the subject of the income tax: first, What were the intentions of his majesty's ministers with respect to the half of the tax due on the 5th instant, and which was generally payable in July? If it was the intention of his majesty's ministers, had the tax been carried, to grant a considerable delay, he saw no reason for not still giving such indulgence. The second question had a reference to the minute of the treasury, directing a deduction in cases where rents had been reduced prior to Lady-day 1815. Many persons had reduced the rents for the period from Lady-day 1815 long after that term; many persons had reduced them only for the period from Michaelmas 1815 to Lady-day 1816; and many persons still intended to make similar reductions. Was no reduction but what had been made previous to Lady-day 1815, to be entitled to any deductions?

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he should merely give a general answer, as these subjects would soon be brought by him before the House. It was his intention to propose some additional indulgence with respect to the payment of the last half year of the property tax. Where rents had been reduced for only a part of the period from Lady-day 1815 to Lady-day 1816, he certainly had not at present any intention of proposing any abatement of the tax: the making allowance in cases of posterior reductions, would be attended with considerable difficulty, and he therefore did not wish to throw out any hopes on this subject.

Mr. Preston rose, and was proceeding to address the House, when Mr. Huskisson spoke to order, there being no question before it. Mr. Western raised a question, by moving that the Speaker do leave the chair.

Mr. *Brougham* expressed his disappointment at the inclination for postponement which seemed to be manifested. He had all along understood that the House was to proceed with as little delay as possible in the discussion of a subject the most important that could occupy its attention. He himself had come down that night with the intention of delivering his sentiments upon it—which no doubt was the intention of other gentlemen also; and he had last night postponed the motion of which he had given notice, expressly from the consideration that this subject, of all others the most interesting to the country, demanded the preference. He trusted that the special inquiries which it had been proposed to make into the questions of wool and seeds, would not have the effect of cutting down the general inquiry into the state of the nation in regard to its agricultural concerns.

Sir *J. Newport* protested, that he had no intention to lessen the importance of the general inquiry by suggesting the idea of special committees on the topics of wool and seeds. His reason for that suggestion was merely this, that, connected as these topics were with the great staple manufacture of the country, it was absolutely necessary that the House should obtain from the manufacturers on the one hand, and the wool growers on the other, that information which could alone enable them to legislate beneficially.

Mr. *Brand* coincided with his right hon. friend, that the questions with regard to wool and seeds must necessarily be referred to committees up stairs. He thought it would be better to postpone proceeding in the general discussion till after the holydays, though he was far from wishing that the House should wait until these committees gave in their reports.

Lord *Castlereagh* thought that he had only coincided with what appeared to be the general sense of the House that some delay should take place; but if any circumstances should induce the hon. member (Mr. Western) to alter his wish, he, for one, should not oppose it.

Mr. *Curwen* thought, that if the only question was as to wool and seeds, there was no doubt that these would be best referred to committees. But it was not one branch only, but the general distress of the agricultural interest, which was the subject before them; and upon this the whole country were looking with anxiety to the views of that House and of ministers. His objection to delay was the disappointment which it would generally create. If the business went over till after Easter, the general feeling among the farmers would be, that they had to look to nothing further from the legislature. Undoubtedly, since the last occasion when he delivered his opinion to the House on this subject, the price of wheat, and of most other grain, had risen in all parts of the country. This was to him a cheering consideration; but he much feared that the manufacturers would be more likely to suffer now than the agriculturists. Ministers, in order to entitle themselves to the confidence of the country, must extend their retrenchments much further than they had done. It was not the retrenchment of small sums, but of millions, that could alone save the country. He should regret extremely if the House did not now go into the committee, because it would operate as a disappointment to the public.

Mr. *Holme Sumner* coincided very much with the hon. member who spoke last. He should regret if an impression went abroad, that the House was not sufficiently alive to the distresses of the country. The hon. member had mentioned another circumstance which he said cheered him—namely, the rise in the prices of grain. This, however, might not prove a subject of congratulation, if it should turn out to be the fact, that every species of produce had been forced by the distress of the farmer too early into the market, and thus extreme cheapness had produced untimely waste. He doubted whether any gentleman had made up his mind as to the mode in which the legislature should interfere; but this was only an additional reason for continuing the discussion.

Mr. *Western* said, he was not anxious that the committee should be postponed if the House were disposed to enter into it. He was anxious it should be remarked, that the delay which had occurred in prosecuting this inquiry could not be justly imputed to him. He had wished it to be commenced early in the session, and had given notice of his motion in the very first week after it opened. Various circumstances had caused the investigation called for to be put off from time to time, till at length the holidays were so near at hand, that he had thought it might be most agreeable to the House that it should be postponed till after the recess. He should be glad to go into the committee if the House were so disposed, as he wished the most prompt measures to be adopted for the relief of the agricultural part of the community, and those to go to the full extent of the power of the legislature.

Sir *Egerton Brydges* moved, that the adjourned debate should be now resumed. He considered the question of the most vital importance, and was therefore anxious that it should not be postponed.

The question that the Speaker should leave the chair was then put and carried, and the House resolved itself into the committee. The first resolution having been read.

Mr. *Brougham* rose and said:*—Mr. Brogden; I feel very sensibly the disadvantages under which I rise to enter upon the discussion of this momentous subject; not only because I am in all respects so ill qualified to handle it successfully, but because a pretty general indisposition has been expressed by the House, to proceeding in the inquiry this night. Nevertheless, as I was one of those who objected to delay, and as I stated my readiness to go on with the debate, I am desirous of delivering my sentiments, such as they are, upon the present occasion, that I may lay before the committee the ideas (whatever they may be worth) which I have gathered from an honest and patient attention to the subject matter of our investigation.

There is one branch of the argument which I shall pass over altogether, I mean the *amount* of the distresses which are now universally admitted to prevail over almost every part of the empire. Upon this topic all men are agreed; the statements connected with it are as unquestionable as they are afflicting; each day's experience since my hon. friend's motion (Mr. Western) has added to their number and increased their force; and the petition from Cambridgeshire presented at an early part of this evening has laid before you a fact, to which all the former expositions of distress afforded no parallel, that in one parish, every proprietor and tenant being ruined with a single exception, the whole poor rates of the parish thus wholly inhabited by paupers, are now paid by an individual, whose fortune once ample, is thus swept entirely away. Of the nature and extent of the evil, then, it is quite superfluous to speak; I purpose with your permission, to apply myself to the examination of its causes, and to such a view of the remedies or palliatives proposed, as may naturally be suggested by a consideration of those causes. Without entering somewhat at large into the origin of our present difficulties, I am afraid we shall be apt to go astray in our search after the means of relief.

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A circumstance which must strike every observer who turns his attention toward this state of the country, is the comparative state of prices before and since the late war. In 1792 the average price of wheat was 47*s*. the quarter; now its price is 57*s*., almost 20 per cent. higher; and yet no complaint was ever heard of low prices before the war, nor were any of those signs of distress to be perceived which in these times claim our pity in every part of the empire. This consideration is of itself sufficient to show that over-trading—that excess of cultivation is not the only cause of the evil we complain of; and may warn us against the error of imputing it to the operation of any one cause alone; for I am certainly disposed to rank the great extension of cultivation among the principal causes, or at least to regard it as lying near the foundation of the mischief. In attempting to unravel the difficulties of this question, I trust the committee will believe me, when I say that I approach it as I should the solution of a problem in the mathematics, without the smallest taint of party feeling, and with no other view whatsoever than a desire to discover the truth, upon a question of great and universal concernment.

The first circumstance to which I would solicit the attention of the committee, as lying at the root of the matter, is the progress of agriculture during the long period of the last war—I mean from the year 1792 downwards. The commencement of hostilities in 1793 produced the stagnation of trade and manufactures which usually accompanies a transition from peace to war; but these difficulties were of uncommonly short duration, and the brilliant success of our arms at sea, the capture of some of the enemy's colonies, the revolt of others and the crippled state of his mercantile resources at home from internal confusion, speedily diminished his commerce in an extraordinary degree, augmenting our own in nearly the same proportion. As his conquests or influence extended over other nations possessed of trade or colonial establishments, these in their turn became exposed to our maritime hostility, and lost their commerce and their plantations; so that in a very short time this country obtained a mercantile and colonial monopoly altogether unprecedented even in the most successful of her former wars. The consequence was, a sudden extension of our manufacturing industry and wealth; and a proportionate improvement in our agriculture. But although this effect began to be perceivable soon after the first successes of the war, it was not fully produced until a few years had elapsed, and a number of circumstances, in some measure accidental, happened to coincide with those which might more reasonably have been expected to occur during the course of the war, in promoting, I might almost say in forcing, the cultivation of the country. I should be disposed to take the ten years from 1797 to 1808, as the period when all those circumstances, of what nature soever, concurred to produce the same effect. It will be worth the attention of the committee to observe how singularly this period is filled with events, all tending one way, all bearing upon the extension of agriculture.

The French commerce and colonies had been previously destroyed; and in 1797, 1798, and 1799, those of Spain and Holland shared the same fate. About this time our monopoly might be said to have reached its height. But several accidental events now concurred with those results of the war, and influenced the progress of cultivation in a visible manner. The scarcity of wheat in 1796, and all sorts of grain in 1799 and 1800, raised the prices so much as to force a vast portion of land into cultivation. In 1797 and still more after 1800, lands were broken up which had never before known the plough, and many wastes were taken in, the tillage of which prudence would perhaps never have authorized. Somewhat of the same effect was thus produced which arose from the destruction of the principal French West Indian colonies early in the late war. The sudden diminution in the supply of sugar raised its price beyond all example, and occasioned a vast extent of new land to be cleared and planted, promoting at the same time the culture of the old plantations. The African slave trade, and the conquest of the Dutch, French, and Spanish settlements, with the consequent influx of British capital, facilitated the progress of West Indian agriculture, until in the course of a few years the blank created by the commotions at St. Domingo and Guadaloupe was much more than supplied; sugars fell as far below their ordinary price as they had lately risen above it; all West Indian proprietors were distressed, and many utterly ruined; the colonies generally speaking were in a state nearly resembling the most suffering districts of the mother country at the present time; and relief was only afforded by the abandonment of many estates, chiefly such as were loaded with debts and consisted of inferior lands, the supply being thus restored to a level with the demand. I do not mention the cases as in all respects parallel, but they agree in many of their principal circumstances.

Together with the scarcities of 1796 and 1800, the financial and military operations of the war, concurred to raise the prices of agricultural produce. Those operations did not certainly create capital, or multiply the number of mouths for consuming food; but they collected capital in masses to be expended less economically in feeding a number of persons more carelessly than the same individuals would have been supported by part of the same capital, had it been left in the hands of private persons. I desire to be understood as casting no reflection upon the administration of the revenue appropriated to the demands of the war, because it is quite unnecessary at present to express my opinion upon this point. Every one must admit that a given sum in the hands of government, even of the most economical ministers, especially if allotted to meeting the various pressing exigencies of warfare, must be expended with much less care and parsimony than the same sums appropriated to the uses of private families under all the checks imposed by individual prudence. The tendency of such a national expenditure unquestionably is, to raise prices above their natural level for a time at least, and thus to force cultivation forward, although in a long course of years the same capital in the hands of the community would have been much more augmented, and would gradually and healthfully have increased the production of the country in a greater, but not in a disproportionate degree. It is not, however, for its effect in stimulating agriculture than any man will be disposed to quarrel with the war and its expenditure. Had it no other sins to answer for, this might well be forgiven.

While the circumstances which I have mentioned were disposing men to extend the cultivation of the kingdom, an event occurred, which in its consequences mightily facilitated this operation. I allude to the stoppage of the bank of England, in the early part of 1797. The alarm in which that extraordinary measure originated, very speedily subsided; and with the restoration of confidence, came a disposition to accommodate, on the part of bankers and other dealers in money and credit, wholly unexampled. The bank of England soon increased its issues; and the numbers of country banks were every where augmented. In districts where no such establishment had ever before been known, they were to be found actively engaged in discounting and lending—and in issuing their own notes. In places too small to support a bank, there were agents appointed by banks fixed at some distance; or a shopkeeper or tradesman, added to his usual and regular calling, the new employment of cashing bills and passing notes. It is true that the check which had now been removed from the great bank in London, still operated to a certain extent upon the minor dealers in credit, thus scattered over the country; they were obliged to pay if required in bank of England paper, although the issuers of that paper were not compelled to pay in specie. But this was rather a nominal than a real restraint, for if the holders of country bank paper could not obtain gold in exchange, they preferred coarse notes with the names of Mr. or sir John such-a-one, whom they knew, to notes somewhat better engraved, but worth just as little, and with the names of a governor and company and a Mr. Newland, whom they knew nothing about—so that the country banks enjoyed the same facility, with the bank in London, of increasing their issues; and they used it with much less reserve. Hence the unlimited accommodation which they afforded to farmers, and generally to all speculators in land. They assisted all adventurers more or less, but adventurers in land most of all, because they had better security to give, and were supposed to be engaged in a less hazardous line of trade. I must here repeat the remark I made upon the tendency of the war to promote cultivation. If the stoppage of the bank had produced no worse effects than throwing dormant capital into circulation, and affording a stimulus to industry, especially to agriculture, I should have little to say against that measure—nay it might have been rather beneficial than hurtful, at least in this point of view, had the accommodation which it afforded been withdrawn more gradually, and at all events, not at the particular moment, when perhaps the state of things required it to be still further extended.

Another circumstance to which I shall advert, also occurred within the period in question, between 1797 and 1808, I mean the great extension of our colonial possessions. The value of those establishments is, I believe, somewhat under-rated in this country; not that we are slow to parade their importance in several particulars—on the contrary, we are prone to magnify them in our accounts of exports and imports, and of the quantity of tonnage, and number of seamen employed in our trade; but we seldom, if ever, reflect on the vast effects produced by them upon the agriculture of the mother country. In promoting this, their wealth operates both through the channels of commerce, and of remittances, almost as directly as the riches of one district of this island expand themselves over and fertilize another less wealthy territory in its neighbourhood. The conquest and rapid cultivation of the Dutch colonies, to take the most remarkable instance, may be traced in its effects upon many a once barren tract of land in the northern parts of Great Britain, where by the names of the farms and of their occupiers you may be reminded of those lucrative speculations in Surinam, Demerara, and Berbice, to which the agriculture of the mother country owed these accessions.

The last circumstance I shall mention as falling within the same period, is the completion of our commercial and manufacturing monopoly, by the destruction of almost all other trade and peaceful industry, the final result of Buonaparté's continental and military system. In the end, indeed, we felt the effects of this prodigious attempt, as I shall presently have occasion to state; but for some time it only consummated the ruin of our competitors, and gave new resources to our seaport and manufacturing towns. The effects of this increase upon the industry of the country, at a period when men were singularly prone to farming speculations, cannot easily be over-rated. We are apt to suppose the sphere of such influence much more contracted than it really is. If any one is desirous of perceiving how widely it extends, I think I can furnish him with a medium through which he may view it. When the measures of the enemy, which began with the Berlin and Milan decrees, had, through the co-operation of our own orders in council, succeeded in crippling the trade of almost all our great towns, the distresses of the merchant and manufacturer affected not merely the farmer in his neighbourhood, but lowered the cattle and corn markets to a great distance, so that fat beasts were sold at very low prices, 100 and even 150 miles from the manufacturing districts in Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire, in consequence of the distresses prevailing over those parts of the country. In like manner, it is evident that the earlier events of the war, which suddenly promoted the wealth of the great towns, tended as rapidly to augment the cultivation of even the remote provinces.

Now, Sir, having ascertained the existence of so many and such powerful causes, uniting their forces in one direction, during the period I have mentioned, and all tending manifestly to promote the agriculture of the country, some of them by tempting men to embark in farming concerns, others by furnishing them with the means of speculation, even if we do not take into the account such circumstances as the general progress of the arts and the depreciation in the value of the circulating medium, and the consequent rise in the money price of produce, which I am very far from under-rating, but only pass over for the present as operating less exclusively upon the cultivation of land than the other circumstances which I have enumerated, I say even if these considerations are omitted, enough has been shown to prove that a start must have been made in the productive powers of this island, quite unexampled in any equal period of its former history. When, on the other hand, I reflect upon the nature of the causes which

I have enumerated, and find that most of them are of sudden occurrence, and that their combination in the short space of about ten years was accidental; when, moreover, I perceive that the most material of them were of a temporary duration, and could not remain long to support the great cultivation which they had occasioned, I am disposed to think that I have got hold of a principle upon which something like an overtrading in agriculture, and a consequent redundance of produce, may be inferred to have happened, how difficult soever it may be to ascertain the amount of this excess by any strict calculation. In truth I am little inclined to resort to estimates upon the present question; where circumstances are clearly proved to have existed, the natural operation of which plainly was such as I have described, it is unnecessary to seek among statistical returns for evidence of effects which we know must have been produced. I have heard of conjectures as to the number of acres inclosed, during the ten years I am referring to, in which there may have been 1200 inclosure bills passed. Some of my hon. friends near me, I know, have estimated this amount at two millions, which I mention not so much from any reliance upon the accuracy of the statement, as out of respect for them, and because this admission is at variance with their own doctrine that there has been no excessive cultivation. But it is evident that such an estimate, even if correct to an acre, would by no means show the increase of production, for a good deal of the land enclosed by act of parliament was formerly cultivated in common field; and, on the other hand, the improvements in the cultivation of the old enclosures have probably done more to augment the whole agricultural produce, than all the new lands that have been taken in. If, however, we take the total amount, every thing included, to be equal to the produce of two millions of acres added to the former produce, and if it be true that the population has only increased two millions during the same period, there will appear to have been an increase of nearly six millions of quarters in the supply, and only an increase in the permanent demand, in the proportion of two millions. But, as I have already said, these estimates are not to be trusted either way, and I had much rather rest upon the broad principle furnished by a reference to the known events in the history of the late war, down to the year 1808. The improvements in most parts of the country have been going on so visibly, that the most careless observer must have been struck by them. Not only wastes have disappeared for miles and miles, giving place to houses, fences, and crops; not only have even the most inconsiderable commons, the very village greens, and the little stripes of sward by the way-side, been in many places subjected to division and exclusive ownership, and cut up into corn-fields in the rage for farming; not only have stubborn soils been forced to bear crops by mere weight of metal, by sinking money in the earth, as it has been called,—but the land that formerly grew something has been fatigued with labour, and loaded with capital, until it yielded much more; the work both of men and cattle has been economized, new skill has been applied, and a more dexterous combination of different kinds of husbandry been practised, until, without at all comprehending the waste lands wholly added to the productive territory of the island, it may be safely said, not perhaps that two blades of grass now grow where one only grew before, but I am sure, that five grow where four used to be; and that this kingdom which foreigners were wont to taunt as a mere manufacturing and trading country, inhabited by a shopkeeping nation, is in reality, for its size, by far the greatest agricultural state in the world.

Previous to the year 1810 or 1811, no great effect appears to have been felt in the corn market from all this system of improvement. The measures taken to increase our produce had not begun fully to operate, and the new inclosures had not yielded their due returns. The crop of 1810 was not a very good one, and that of 1811 was extremely bad. But about 1812, when the new cultivation and the improvements in farms generally, may be supposed to have produced their full effect, there began a series of events, some of them accidental and beyond human foresight to anticipate, others less strange perhaps in themselves, but in their union scarcely more to be expected, all operating in the same direction, and that direction the very opposite, as far as regards agriculture, to the line in which the no less unparalleled combination of circumstances already mentioned, had been operating in the preceding years. The harvest of 1812 was a very abundant one; that of 1813, I believe, exceeded any that had ever been known; and the crop of 1814 was not much inferior. But the political events of those three years had an influence still more important upon the markets. Here I must take leave to state how widely I differ with my hon. friend the member for Essex (Mr. Western), respecting the effects of the peace. In the able and luminous speech with which he introduced this subject to the House, and in which he showed at once the greatest industry, talent, and moderation, he contended that the termination of hostilities could not be assigned as a cause of the depression in prices, because those prices had begun to fall during the war; and he observed in confirmation of his position, that after former treaties of peace, agricultural produce had risen. The facts upon which he relied when taken altogether, far from supporting his doctrine, furnish me with a satisfactory answer to it. After the peace of Paris, it is true, wheat rose from 36 to 41 shillings the quarter, in 1763, and to 42*s*. 6*d*. on an average of five years, ending 1767. So after the peace of Versailles, it rose 5*s*. the quarter. But the statements upon which my hon. friend relied, as decisive in his favour, were taken from the period question, viz. the year 1813. In January of that year, the market price of wheat was 120*s*., and in November it had fallen to 75*s*. The victualling contracts of Portsmouth, were made in January at 123*s*. 10*d*.: in November at 67*s*. 10*d*. Those of Plymouth, in February at 121*s*. 9*d*., in September at 86*s*. Those of Deptford, in February for flour per sack—at 100*s*. 3*d*., in November at 65*s*. Now I beg the committee's attention to these facts, because when coupled with the well known events of the year 1813, they clearly refute my hon. friend's argument, pretended to be built upon them. In January and February wheat and flour were high; in September they had fallen very considerably, owing partly no doubt, to the very abundant harvest reaped during the interval, but in no small degree owing to the important change in public affairs which had taken place during the same interval. The destruction of Buonaparté's grand army had been effected the winter before, and had laid the foundation of the deliverance of Europe, but that happy event had not been completed. The most gigantic enterprise which unprincipled force had ever attempted in modern times, had been defeated by a lucky concurrence of accidents with the violence that gave birth to the project; but much of its author's power still remained unbroken, and no man could foresee that the blind fury which had borne him into jeopardy, would still hurry him to ruin. At all events, a new and a desperate struggle was inevitable, and the great prize of peace on the one side, or universal empire on the other, was to be fought for once more in the ensuing campaign. In the spring and summer of 1813 this battle was fought; and the enemy after incredible efforts of gallantry and skill, was repulsed—but nothing more. Peace seemed considerably more probable, therefore, in September, than it had been in January; but it was not certain. The improvement in our prospects, however, co-operated with the harvest, and prices were lowered from 122*s*. to 86*s*. Soon after this period came the decisive battle of Leipsic; peace was now certain, and all that remained to be settled was the terms upon which it should be made, and the degree of security which should attend it; for the struggle which followed could be said to decide nothing more. Accordingly in the interval between September and November prices had fallen from 86 to 68, in round numbers. Contractors could no longer expect the same terms when in all likelihood this was their last bidding. Government was not pressed as before, when its difficulties were so nearly at an end; and the market felt the effects not only of an extraordinary crop, but of the approaching times of peace when the demands of government should be withdrawn, and the supplies of the continent poured in. No man who attends to these facts and dates can entertain a reasonable doubt that the fall of prices was in some degree connected with the approaching termination of the war.

In truth, Sir, it is impossible to overlook the tendency of such a change as the peace brought about in all the great markets of agricultural produce. A sudden diminution in the expenditure of government, to the amount of above fifty millions, could not be effected without greatly deranging all markets, both for manufactures and produce directly; and by affecting the markets for manufactures, it must also have influenced circuitously those in which the farmer is more immediately interested. To take only a few specimens of these effects: Can it be denied that the stoppage of the exportation of grain, provisions, and even forage, to the peninsula, had an influence in lowering the prices of those articles at home? When orders are no longer given for clothing in Yorkshire, and arms in Warwickshire, does the change which throws so many manufacturers out of employment produce no diminution in the demand for food, and no increase in the levy of parish rates? Look at the effects of the government retiring from the Irish provision market, now that three-fourths of the navy are dismantled. Beside the accounts from the sister kingdom, every gentleman connected with the north and west of England knows, that last summer and autumn the droves of Irish cattle poured through Liverpool, Bristol, and the Welch ports, covered the roads for miles; and that the price of butchers meat, and the rents of grazing farms, which had till then kept up, notwithstanding the fall of grain and of corn lands, began to be sensibly affected. I state these circumstances with the more satisfaction because they are in their nature temporary, and we are led to a somewhat more comfortable prospect by the consideration, that whatever part of the present distresses is ascribable to the change from war to peace, may reasonably be expected to diminish every day, at least as soon as the results of the peace shall enable the general trade of the country to resume its natural and accustomed channels; and shall supply the blank occasioned directly and circuitously in the demands for produce, by the diminished expenditure of government.

The next circumstance to which I shall advert as materially operating against agriculture, is the distress in the commercial world during the latter years of the war. It is very certain that the effects of the fatal year 1810, continue to be felt at this day in the mercantile world. The foundations were then laid of many failures, which have only been delayed by the natural efforts of unfortunate men to ward off a blow they could not escape; efforts which it is impossible very harshly to blame, although undoubtedly the delay of the crash has in most instances only rendered it more pernicious to creditors, and extended its effect more widely, occasioning, perhaps, several failures instead of one. The difficulties of 1812 are fresh in the recollection of the committee, and are still working their effects in many parts of the country, although the repeal of the orders in council by enabling us to export goods, which were all paid for to the amount of seven or eight millions, afforded a most seasonable and important relief, and enabled capitalists to lower their stock on hand in a great proportion. That stock, however, began to increase during the unhappy continuance of the American war; and the peace, unexpectedly made, in Europe, followed by the treaty with America, soon produced an effect to which I must request the serious attention of the committee, because I believe its nature and extent is by no means well understood. After the cramped state in which the enemy's measures, and our own retaliation (as we termed it), had kept our trade for some years, when the events of spring 1814, suddenly opened the continent, a rage for exporting goods of every kind burst forth, only to be explained by reflecting on the previous restrictions we had been labouring under, and only to be equalled (though not in extent), by some of the mercantile delusions connected with South American speculations. Every thing that could be shipped was sent off; all the capital that could be laid hold of was embarked. The frenzy, I can call it nothing less, after the experience of 1806 and 1810, descended to persons in the humblest circumstances, and the furthest removed, by their pursuits, from commercial cares. It may give the committee some idea of this disease, if I state what I know to have happened in one or two places. Not only clerks and labourers, but menial servants engaged the little sums which they had been laying up for a provision against old age and sickness; persons went round tempting them to adventure in the trade to Holland, and Germany, and the Baltic; they risked their mite in the hopes of boundless profits; it went with the millions of the more regular traders: the bubble soon burst, like its predecessors of the South Sea, the Mississippi, and Buenos Ayres; English goods were selling for much less in Holland and the north of Europe, than in London and Manchester; in most places they were lying a dead weight without any sale at all; and either no returns whatever were received, or pounds came back for thousands that had gone forth. The great speculators broke; the middling ones lingered out a precarious existence, deprived of all means of continuing their dealings either at home or abroad; the poorer dupes of the delusion had lost their little hoards, and went upon the parish the next mishap that befel them; but the result of the whole has been much commercial distress—a caution now absolutely necessary in trying new adventures—a prodigious diminution in the demand for manufactures, and indirectly a serious defalcation in the effectual demand for the produce of land.

The peace with America has produced somewhat of a similar effect, though I am very far from placing the vast exports which it occasioned upon the same footing with those to the European market the year before; both because ultimately the Americans will pay, which the exhausted state of the continent renders very unlikely; and because it was well worth while to incur a loss upon the first exportation, in order, by the glut, to stifle in the cradle those rising manufactures in the United States, which the war had forced into existence contrary to the natural course of things. But, in the mean time, the enormous amount of, I believe, eighteen millions worth of goods were exported to North America in one year; I am informed nearly sixteen millions went through the port of Liverpool alone; and, for a considerable part of this, no returns have been received, while still more of it must have been selling at a very scanty profit. The immediate effect has been a sensible increase of the difficulties which I have already described as flowing from the unexpected opening of the European market in the impoverished and unsettled state of the continent.

And now it was, when a general commercial distress began to prevail, that the consequences of our paper circulation, and the banking operations connected with it, not gradually as had been expected, but almost instantaneously developed themselves. Whether the change of measures, which I am about to mention as one of the principal, if not the very first cause of our present sufferings, began with the country banks or the bank of England; whether it was the necessary consequence of the difficulties which were pressing upon trade, and which, at any rate, it mightily increased, or was the chief cause of those difficulties; whether or not blame is imputable to any persons, or bodies corporate, I will not stop to inquire, for it is wholly immaterial to the present investigation; and when I mention certain known facts in one order rather than another, I do so without intending to assert that they were connected together. The bank of England not very slowly limited its discounts and diminished its issues of paper about three millions. At one period, indeed, the amount of notes in circulation had exceeded that to which they were now reduced, by six millions; but the average had been for some time about three millions higher. The country banks acting less upon system and more under the influence of alarm, lessened their discounts in a much greater degree. A single failure would stop all such transactions over a whole district, and I could mention one large stoppage which made it difficult, for a length of time, to discount a bill any where in three or four counties. The persons who felt this change most severely were of course those who had been speculating in any way, but above all others, speculators in land; those who had either purchased or improved beyond their actual means upon the expectation of that credit and accommodation being continued, which had enabled them to commence their operations. Ordinary traders have much greater facilities in the money market; and their speculations are much more speedily terminated. The improver of land has to deal with property not easily convertible into money, and his adventures extend necessarily over a long course of years. Persons in this situation soon found their borowed capital withdrawn; when the fall of produce made it difficult for them to pay the interest, they were suddenly called upon for the principal; they had gotten into a situation which no prudence could have enabled them to avoid, because it was the result of events which no sagacity could have foreseen; they had for many years been tempted to speculate by a facility of obtaining capital or credit, which in a month or two was utterly withdrawn; and before the least warning had been given either by the course of events, or by the dealers in money and accommodation, a support was removed which the most cautious of men might well have expected to be continued indefinitely, or at any rate, to be gradually removed. I beg leave in illustration of this matter, to remind the committee how those undertakings have been carried on which I before described as extending so greatly the agriculture of the country. A man of small fortune, or a farmer making considerable profits by the high prices of the period I have so often alluded to, saw an opportunity of making a desirable purchase, upon an enclosure, or a sale in his neighbourhood. He had scraped together a couple of thousand pounds, perhaps; but the sum required for buying, and then improving the land, was four or five. The banker supplied this difference, and by his accommodations enabled some middleman, trading in credit, to supply it, and the cultivator had every reason to hope he should, in a few years, be able to repay it by the continued prosperity of farming concerns. At any rate he reckoned upon paying the interest and not being called upon for the principal, in security of which he probably deposited the title deeds of his purchase as a pledge. The extension of cultivation caused by these very operations, together with the other circumstances to which I have referred, rapidly lowers the price of all produce; the alarm of money dealers begins to spread; hardly able to pay the interest which is in reality a fourth more than it was while the currency was depreciated 25 per cent., he is called upon to pay up the principal itself; destitute of any thing that can be turned into money, he is fain to abandon his purchase with all the improvements which his savings and his toil have made upon it; and the lender finds himself in hardly a better situation, without the means of obtaining payment, and with title deeds in his hand, which he can turn to no account, unless he brings the land into the market. Now, the certainty of such a measure lowering its price, prevents this step from being taken; and, accordingly, great as the distress has been, very little land has been actually sold; not so much as ought to have been, is thrown out of cultivation; good money, to use the common expression, is thrown after bad; the money dealer becomes, from necessity, a land-jobber; and the distress continues pushing its shoots in all directions, round the whole circle of trade, until, by re-action, the farmer suffers again indirectly, and the total amount of suffering is, if I may so speak, augmented by its universality, and the connexion of its parts. Nor should I be at all surprised if things were to grow worse before they got better; at least I am very certain that the price of land will be lower before it is higher, from the undoubted fact of many sales that must take place, having been delayed as long as possible in the vain hope of the necessity being evaded.

In referring to the state of credit and circulation, I have purposely avoided dwelling upon the great evils that have resulted from the fluctuations in the value of the currency, not because I under-rate them, but because they only affect one class of sufferers from the present distresses, I mean those who have made bargains or formed calculations for time; such as persons taking long leases, or borrowing money at a fixed rate of interest, or speculating upon making sales at a future period. Of these classes I shall say a word or two by-and-bye. But there is a circumstance affecting all classes, and of which it is quite impossible to exaggerate the importance in accounting for the changes that have recently afflicted the agriculture of the kingdom, I mean, the state of our finances—the complete revolution which the last twenty-five years have effected in the revenue and expenditure of the country.

During that period our revenue has increased from 15 to about 66 millions; our expenditure in one year exceeded 125 millions; this year of peace it is to be above 72 millions, and no hopes are held out of its being permanently below 65. That such a prodigious change could be wrought in the system of taxation and of public credit, without seriously affecting the landed interest, from which so large a proportion of the taxes is drawn, no man will for a moment suppose. But I believe few have formed to themselves distinct ideas of the manner in which excessive taxation has been operating on agriculture, and very inadequate notions are I am sure, entertained of the amount of that operation. It is not indeed, very easy to trace it; and to estimate precisely how much of the pressure falls exclusively upon the cultivator would be impossible. But I shall take the liberty of submitting to you such means of approximation as I have been able to find, aware of the justice of an observation made this night by the member for Surrey (Mr. H. Sumner,) that by communicating freely the ideas which have struck each of us upon this great question, we may hope for mutual correction and instruction.

I shall suppose a farm of 400 acres of fair good land, yielding a rent of from 5*l.* to 600*l.* a year, managed according to the husbandry practised in the northern counties, with which only I can profess any particular acquaintance. It will require for a four course, 200 acres, being in corn, 100 fallow, and 100 in hay and grass, fourteen plough horses, and supposing a saddle horse, and a servant, and a dog to be paid for, with a farm-house of twelve windows, the assessed taxes will amount to 22*l.* 8*s.* a year. This is a clear addition to the expenses of 1792, with which I am making the comparison. I pass over the income tax, as not peculiar to farmers, though it has been peculiarly oppressive to them wherever the estimated exceeded the real profits. But the principal increase of expense has been upon the labour. The wages of the nine regular men servants who must be employed, have risen since 1792 from 30*l.* to 50*l.* each, but I will put the rise only at 15*l.*, making in the whole 135*l.* Beside this, we must allow for the rise in the day labour required at spring and fall. Upon the 200 acres in corn, this will amount to a rise from 10*s.* an acre to 15*s.* or 50*l.* in all—Upon the other 100 acres in hay and grass, the rise will be from 5*s.* an acre to 7*s.* 6*d.*—and the same upon the 100 acres of fallow—making an addition of 25*l.*; or 75*l.* for the whole increase upon day labour. Two women servants must be allowed—and their wages are more increased in proportion, than those of men, principally I believe, from the unwillingness of farmers wives and daughters to work as they used to do before the more flourishing times; but take the rise on this head only at 10*l.*—and we have the total increase on labour 220*l.* Blacksmiths' and carpenters' bills have in like manner been raised, certainly not less than 15*l.* each upon such a farm as I am supposing; and the rise on saddlers' bills cannot be estimated at less than 10*l.*; making upon these bills a rise of 40*l.*, which added to the former heads, gives the total increase in the expenses of cultivating such a farm, as equal to 282*l.* 8*s.*, independent of the great rise on lime and all sorts of manure.

Now I admit, that we have no right to set down the whole or nearly the whole of this large sum to the taxes which have been imposed since 1792: but a great part of it manifestly does arise from those taxes. Whatever part arises from the increased prices of grain and other provisions may be deducted, and will fall again with those prices. Whatever remains must be ascribed to the taxes chiefly. Above 22*l.* of the sum comes from direct taxation. At least one half of the rise on the saddlers' bills, or 5*l.* more is owing to the same cause. But a considerable proportion of the grand item of labour is imputable to the taxes also. For let us only reflect on the nature of the duties which have been imposed. Many of them affect articles of prime necessity; as soap, salt, leather, and candles, all of which are ranked among necessaries of life by the writers on these subjects, and, what is a better authority, are felt to be such by the consumers; taxes upon all of which are allowed by those writers to affect directly the price of labour. Now the tax on leather has been doubled within the last four years: being raised from three halfpence, at which it stood before the war [Here the chancellor of the exchequer said across the table, " And ever since the reign of Queen Anne"] to threepence, the present duty. The duty on salt which in 1782, and I believe up to 1792 was only 10*d.* a bushel, had been raised previous to 1806 to 15 shillings, the present duty. And candles have in the same period been taxed considerably. But these articles are not the only ones which may be reckoned necessaries, and are subjected to additional duties. In most parts of England beer is to be classed in this list, from the universal custom of drinking it which prevails, and the duties upon it most seriously affect the farmer as a consumer of it, besides their pernicious tendency against his interest as a grower. The duty on malt has been raised from 10*s.* 7*d.* per quarter, to 34*s.* 8*d.*, of which 16*s.* is war duty; that on beer since 1802 has been increased from 5*s.* 7½*d.* per barrel, to 9*s.* 7¼*d.* or about 4*s.*, while that on spirits has been raised since 1792 from 7*d.* to 21*d.* per gallon of wash, or 14*d.* addition. The total revenue collected from these duties is 12,350,000*l.*, by which the land suffers directly in proportion to the whole amount, and indirectly in proportion as its cultivators are consumers of the manufactured article. But the price of agricultural labour is affected likewise by the duties of custom on many imported goods, which long habit has rendered scarcely less essential than some which I have enumerated as articles of first necessity. Of this class is sugar, upon which the heaviest taxes known in the history of finance, are laid. I believe indeed there are many persons who would rather go without soap than sugar; and this is now subject to a duty of 30*s.* per cwt. instead of 15*s.*, at which it was taxed before 1793. It must also be observed that whatever prohibiting or protecting duties have been laid upon foreign manufactures of articles used in clothing, these fall directly upon the labourer, and in so much tend to raise his wages, for the benefit, not certainly of the farmer, but the manufacturer. It is therefore evident that much of the augmentation in the expense of working a farm, a considerable portion of the sum of 220*l.*, which I have stated to have been added since 1792 to that large branch of a farmer's expenditure, is chargeable to the taxes; and a portion also of the sum of 35*l.* the part of the rise in the carpenter's and other bills not directly affected by taxes, must also be charged to the same account. It is impossible to state with any degree of accuracy what the total amount of the increase of taxation has been upon these items; but that it must have been considerable no one can reasonably doubt; and I beg to warn gentlemen against under-rating it from the fall in the rate of wages that has lately taken place. Labour has indeed come down, and in my opinion a good deal more than was to be wished, I mean a good deal more than the fall of other prices justified. This fall must have resulted from the general distress of the country, and the number of hands in consequence every where thrown out of employment; but it is no sort of proof that the present is the natural and healthy state of wages; or that they will long remain so low; or that the fall in the price of provisions has permanently reduced wages to their level before the war; and therefore it is no kind of evidence that the increase in the expense of cultivation has arisen from the rise in prices alone, and not also from the increase of taxation.

But it may be said, that the taxes have not fallen exclusively upon the farmer, and that he only suffers in common with the rest of the country. Now, to this I shall offer, I think, the most satisfactory answers. It must be remembered, in the first place, that part of the taxes fall directly and exclusively upon the landed interest. Some of the assessed taxes, and the enormous malt, beer, and spirit duties are clearly of this description. But next, observe how differently the farmer is circumstanced in these times from the other parts of the community, with respect to the rise in wages, produced partly by the taxes. The commodity in which he deals is on the decline in point of price from over cultivation; he cannot therefore throw the tax upon the consumer. If manufactured goods are in high demand, the customer pays the duties to which the manufacturer may be subject, either directly, or indirectly by the rise in wages caused by those taxes. If those goods are falling in price, the tax presses upon the manufacturer himself. Now this is, and for some time past has been, in a peculiar manner, the state of the farmer, who indeed never has the means of suddenly accommodating the supply of his commodity to the demand, with the nicety and dispatch observable in the operations of trade. But, a still more material circumstance distinguishes the situation of the farmer from that of the manufacturer, relieving the latter at the expense of the former. I allude to the state of the law, which throws upon the land the whole burthen of maintaining the poor, and reduces the price of all labour below its natural level at the sole expense of the cultivator. It is well known to the committee, that whatever may have been the intention of the legislature, (and the meaning of the statute of Elizabeth is sufficiently plain), yet, from a defect in the powers of the act, the money raised for the support of the poor, is paid entirely by the land. Persons in trade only pay in so far as they are also owners of real property. Thus a manufacturer who is deriving ten or twelve thousand a year from his trade, is rated as if he only had a large building worth four or five hundred a year beside his dwelling-house, while his neighbour, who possesses a farm of the same yearly value pays as much; that is, the man of ten thousand a year in trade, pays no more than the man of five hundred a year in land. Yet, only observe the difference between the two in the relation to labour and to the poor. The farmer employs a few hands—the manufacturer a whole colony;—the farmer causes no material augmentation in the number of paupers—the manufacturer multiplies paupers by wholesale; the one supports—the other makes paupers, manufactures them just as certainly, and in something of the same proportion as he manufactures goods. The inequality of this distribution is plain enough, but I am now speaking of it in its relation chiefly to the subject of wages. From the abuse of the poor laws, it has become the prevailing practice to support by parish relief, not merely persons who are disabled from working by disease or age, but those who, though in health, cannot earn enough to maintain them; and, by a short-sighted policy, wholly unaccountable, the custom has spread very widely of keeping down the wages of labour by the application of the poor-rates, as if any thing could equal the folly of paying rates rather than hire; of parting with the disposition of your own money, and of paying for labour, not in proportion to your own demand for that labour, but in proportion to some general average of the district you chance to live in. I pass over the inevitable effect of this arrangement, in raising the total amount of the sums paid for labour, and in throwing upon one farm the expenses of cultivating another less favourably circumstanced; it is enough for my present purpose to remark, that the whole effect of the system is to make the land pay a sum yearly, levied in the most unequal manner, applied in the least economical way, for the purpose of lowering the wages generally, and lowering the wages of manufacturing as well as agricultural labour. From this unquestionable position, I draw two inferences, I think equally undeniable, and bearing directly upon the subject of our present inquiry;—the one is, that the effects of taxation in raising the price of labour are not distributed equally over all classes of the community, but fall exclusively upon the land, the land paying for the rise which the taxes have occasioned, both in agricultural labour, and in all other kinds of work—the other is, that, even if the fall in the price of provisions should apparently restore wages permanently to their former level, the real rate of wages would still be raised, and the real costs of cultivation be augmented, unless the poor rates also had been brought back to their former amount. The sum now levied upon the land for this purpose, exceeds eight millions. Before the American war it was less than two. I think I have said enough to show how immediately, how severely, how exclusively the rise in the taxes from fifteen to sixty-six millions has pressed upon agriculture; how impossible it is to expect substantial relief as long as that pressure continues.

I have now, Sir, I fear, at a very unreasonable length, gone through the causes which appear to have co-operated in producing our present distresses; and I come at last to a consideration of the means by which the evil may be remedied, or at least rendered supportable. In entering upon this part of the subject, I feel sensibly the delicacy of the ground I am going to tread. No one ought, without the most serious examination of it, to venture an opinion which (from the respect paid to our deliberations in this place), may have a material influence upon the fortunes of individuals, and, at any rate, may agitate their hopes and fears in a crisis of such general solicitude. I wish, therefore, to state nothing that has not been suggested to my mind by every mature and anxious deliberation; but, whatever may appear justified by such research, I think it my duty to propound, without the smallest regard to personal considerations, or to the prejudices that may prevail in any quarter.

And, first, I am afraid there is one class of persons who can hardly expect effectual relief from any measures, or from any supposable change of times; I mean those who have been trading largely in land upon borrowed capital. They have speculated upon a continuance of extravagant prices, and the fund is, in all likelihood, gone for ever, out of which their debts were to have been repaid. The fall in the market price of bullion is of itself a severe loss to such adventurers; they have still to pay in money as before, when every hundred pounds is really worth one hundred and twenty-five; they have to pay as much money to their creditors as formerly, and they can only receive three-fourths as much from their customers. I would fain hope, however, that such is not the situation of the great bulk of proprietors, to whom, perhaps, a permanent relief (and even to the speculator a palliative) may possibly be found. Those who have been expending large sums on bad land are in the worst state, and I fear that a good deal which ought never to have been cultivated at all, must be abandoned, and much grass land that should not have been broken up, must be laid down again as well as circumstances will permit, unquestionably at a great loss. The lowering of rents, which has pretty generally taken place, can hardly be reckoned any considerable relief, if other circumstances remain the same. It is a severe loss to the landlord, a loss which he sustains alone of all who have made time bargains; for no one hears of mortgagees or other creditors giving up twenty-five per cent., either on principal or interest, because the value of money has risen in that proportion; but to the tenant it affords a very inadequate relief, for he is complaining of a fall in the price of his gross produce, of above three pounds an acre, (supposing the produce to be three quarters per acre), and all that the landlord can do for him is to take off five shillings an acre, leaving him to struggle against a loss of fifty-five shillings. But I shall now beg the attention of the committee to the different measures which have been proposed, and in discussing these, as well as in submitting others to your consideration, I shall be guided by the view which I have taken of the nature and causes of the evil.

The first of these remedies, in point of importance as well as of time, is the corn bill of last session. Although that measure is no longer a matter of discussion, yet as I had not the honour of a seat in this house either when my honourable friend (Mr. Western) brought forward the bill of 1804, or when he raised the importation price last year from 63*s.* 6*d.* to 80*s.* I deem it more fair not to avoid the topic, but to state my opinion frankly upon its merits, the more especially as it has been the object of very strong disapprobation in many parts of the country. I certainly am disposed to think favourably of it, although I am well aware how diffidently it becomes us to speak upon a measure which has divided so widely the ablest men, both in parliament and out of doors, marshalling in almost equally formidable array on the opposite sides of the dispute, the statesmen and the political authors,* whose opinions upon such a subject are the most entitled to respect. As it is impossible, however, upon such a controversy not to oppose great authorities, so it is some comfort that, for the same reason, one has the support also of eminent names; and this emboldens me in stating, that I conceive the measure to be politic, at the least, as a palliative, or as affording the means of carrying the country through difficulties, the greatest pressure of which we may hope will only prove temporary. But then, I can by no means excuse the language of those who deride it merely because it is temporary, or as they term it, an expedient. If it enables us to get over the existing evils, arising, in great part, from a transition to a new state of things, it does a great permanent good; it saves much valuable capital from being totally lost, much skill and labour already bestowed, from being thrown away; and it may thus, even where it fails in affording entire relief, be most important as preventing entire ruin. A measure of this description is only in name one of a temporary nature; its operation is solid and lasting. I pass over its tending to secure a constant and certain supply of food to the community; I am speaking of it merely as a measure calculated for the relief of the agricultural interests, and of all the branches of trade immediately dependent upon them. In the same light may be regarded the extension of the measure to some other kinds of agricultural produce, which is at present before parliament.

But I own I view, in a very different light, my honourable friend's propositions respecting bounties upon the exportation of corn. To pass over every other objection to such a plan, if there be any truth in the positions which I think I have established, that the principal causes of our distresses are the too rapid extension of cultivation, and the intolerable weight of the taxes; surely it follows inevitably that to force exportation by a bounty, would only perpetuate the one of these causes, and increase the other. Indeed, I marvel that my honourable friend could have thought of such a measure in times like the present. Why, its very essence is taxation, and to a vast amount,—taxation upon the people of this country to make us sell corn cheap to foreigners—taxation upon the land already oppressed with burthens. And how are such new sums to be levied? We have got rid of the income tax—that is some relief to the farmer. Does my honourable friend wish this burthen to be once more imposed for the relief of agriculture? Or, does he peradventure desire to see the malt tax again raised from 14*s.* to 30*s.* in order to encourage the production of grain? All that has ever been paid in bounties formerly, is a trifle compared with the sums which this new scheme would require. In 1814, for instance, the last year for which we have the return, the whole of the bounties paid by government did not exceed 206,800*l.* —a sum, in all probability, very injudiciously bestowed, but still not very ruinous in its amount. A corn bounty, when wheat is selling, perhaps, 20*s.* a quarter higher in this country than in the foreign markets, would cost a million for every million of quarters taken out of the home market: and each effect produced by this forced exportation, in raising the price at home, would render the exportation more costly.

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* See, on the one side, Mr. Malthus's excellent tracts—and, on the other, the very able discussion of the corn bill of 1804, by Mr. Mill.

But nothing, in my humble opinion, can be worse founded than another remedy suggested by my honourable friend; I mean the exclusion of foreign corn from our warehouses and the encouragement to store our own grain in the public repositories. Have farmers no barn-yards or granaries of their own, in which they can keep their corn until the market is favourable? Are the crops in greater danger of rats there than in the King's warehouses? But it is pretended that foreign corn is at present imported, and fills the public granaries, ready to be poured out the instant that the Gazette gives the signal, by declaring the average to be 80*s.* for the last six weeks; and my honourable friend considers that if the permission thus to warehouse foreign grain were withdrawn, no such effect could be produced. Now, I will suffer myself to be devoured by the vermin I have been talking of, if I do not, in a few minutes, show my honourable friend himself, the fallacy of this argument. Does he think that merchants wait for the Gazette to learn the price during any period of six weeks? Are they ignorant of the weekly and daily state of the markets? Do they not know at any moment of any six weeks how the prices are running, and can they form no guess, as the six weeks elapse, of the average at which the Gazette return is likely to state them? Why, the corn merchant does not even wait until a harvest is ripe before he commences his calculations, in order to form his plans of importation. I happen to know a little of this branch of trade, and I can inform my honourable friend, that there are emissaries sent round the country while the grain is in the ear, to collect samples, which are sifted out and measured and weighed, in order to affix data upon which the goodness of the crop, its yield, may be estimated, long before a sickle has glanced among the stalks. While my honourable friend is sitting in his study, forming plans upon the supposition that those corn-merchants will wait for the periodical promulgation of the average, by the King's printer, they are actually in his fields, committing an innocent trespass, to obtain the earliest information of the next crop as the groundwork of their speculations; and upon this knowledge they speedily begin to act. If the permission to warehouse is withheld, they still must act upon the rise of the markets, and the only difference will be, that instead of collecting the grain on this side of the water, they will have it on the other, to the benefit of foreign merchants, agents, and warehousemen, but just as ready to be poured in as if it were in our own ports. Indeed, any one must be sensible, after a moment's consideration, that nothing but a confident expectation of the price approaching to 80*s.* could induce merchants to bring over their cargoes and lodge them in this country, when they know, that until it reaches the point, all the expenses of the importation are incurred for nothing. Whether the voyage is made before or after the day on which the Gazette declares the point has been attained, must obviously be a matter of perfect indifference; and it is the only thing which the permission or prohibition of warehousing can affect.

The alteration suggested in the laws relating to wool, appears to me in a very different light. I had the honour of broaching this important subject on the first day of the session, and every thing that has since come to my knowledge confirms the opinion I then ventured to express. As a committee has been appointed this night to investigate the question, at the suggestion of my hon. friend (Mr. Frankland Lewes), who has thrown so much light on the whole matter now under discussion, I shall abstain from going into it at length; but I must beg to press upon your attention how greatly the agricultural interests are concerned in it. The most important relief has been afforded to many parts of the country by the good prices which wool has borne during the depression of almost all other produce: I allude especially to the long coarse wool, the ancient and peculiar staple of this island. Ten years ago it was from 9*d.* to 1*s.* the pound; now it is 21*d.*, and it was recently as high as 2*s.* This article is the growth, and has, during the bad times, formed the support of Lincolnshire and the midland counties. Further northwards we have principally the coarse wool from the black-faced sheep. This is grown in the northern counties, and as far as Edinburgh: it used to be 7*d.* or 8*d.*, and is now 14*d.* or 15*d.* the pound. The relief afforded by such prices is not confined to the wool grower; it extends to all other agriculturists in his neighbourhood; because whatever saves a farmer from distress or ruin upon the general balancing of his accounts, keeps him from glutting the market with his produce or stock, and prevents the general market of agricultural produce from being depressed. In like manner, to support the wool districts has extended relief to the other districts, and has produced a favourable effect upon the whole markets of the country, rendering the pressure of the general distress considerably lighter than it would have been had the wool grower been in the same predicament with all other agriculturists. There is every reason however to apprehend, that this article also is on the decline: it has actually fallen within the last three months, and would certainly fall much more rapidly but for the large orders now in the market in consequence of extensive contracts for clothing foreign troops. I have heard of one contract for the uniforms of 150,000 men, which must raise the demand for the wool immediately connected with that in question. Under these circumstances, and indeed at any time, it seems to be a most unwise policy as far as regards our agriculture, to prohibit the exportation of wool. The finer sort would in all probability find no market abroad, and a permission to export it would therefore have no effect either way; but for the coarse, especially the long wool, there must always be a great demand, as it is absolutely necessary to certain manufactures, and is at present peculiar to this island. It well deserves the attention of the committee, whether the prohibiting laws should not be repealed, which compel the wool grower to sell his commodity at home, in order that the manufacturer may work it, and the consumer may wear it much cheaper than they would if the farmer had the choice of his market. The establishment of a free trade would not raise the price above its present standard, nor in all likelihood would it prevent some further fall, but it would at least guard us against the great depression which may now be apprehended. These are points, however, well worthy of inquiry, and I look to the labours of the committee appointed to night for much information upon them.

But the most material subject for our consideration, consistently with the view which I have taken of the present distresses, is manifestly the burthens peculiarly affecting land; and these are the tythes, parish rates, and general taxes. Upon the subject of tythes, I have much to submit to your notice, as it has long and anxiously engaged my attention; but it seems not to be peculiarly connected with our present inquiry, as tythe rather affects the expenditure of capital in improvements, and this is certainly not the predicament of almost any person in these times. I am desirous therefore of deferring to another opportunity the observations which I have to make on the plans of commutation proposed by different gentlemen, particularly by my hon. friend the member for Hertfordshire (Mr. Brand) as well as another method not yet suggested, by which I feel assured an arrangement of this important matter might be made with great facility and safety. The subject of the poor-rates, however, is one which, in an especial manner, presses for discussion; and I am confident that every one who may have honoured with his attention the observations which I have submitted to you, will perceive how essential some revision of the system is to the welfare of agriculture.

It is clear that the exclusive pressure of parish rates upon the land, was never in contemplation of the legislature; but as the 43d of Elizabeth, whatever it may enact with respect to the persons who shall pay, furnishes no means of obtaining payment in proportion to the profits of trade and professions, the law, if unaltered, must continue to throw the whole burthen upon the land owner. In addition to this he has to support almost all the public works, as roads, bridges, and churches, in which he is no more interested than the other members of the community. They are made originally at his expense, and kept in repair by him; and, although the rest of the country refunds a part of the money originally advanced, yet, every one knows, how seldom this is adequate to his repayment—while the repairs, constantly required, are a certain loss to him. At present, however, I am speaking chiefly of the poor-rates. The deviation, in some measure necessary, from the intent of the statute of Elizabeth, as to the class who shall pay them, is not more fatal to the interest of the land owner, than the perversion of that law, without any such excuse, to the support of all poor persons, whether capable or incapable of work, and the supply of money to those who earn what are deemed inadequate gains. I confess that I see but one radical cure for the state into which this last abuse has thrown the country, and which is daily growing worse, deranging its whole economy; debasing its national character. The inequality of the system may be remedied; as least, I would fain hope that some method might be devised, without having recourse to the odious machinery of the income tax, for making the other property bear its share with the land in defraying the expense which should fall equally on all income, if it is to be compulsory upon any. But though great relief may thus be obtained, the worst vices of the system are deeper seated, and admit, I fear, but of one cure. As the law is now administered, under the influence of the habits which have unfortunately grown up with the abuse of it, the lower orders look to parish relief, no longer with dread or shame; but they regard it as a fund out of which their wants may at all times be supplied. To say nothing of the effects of this feeling upon their habits of industry and economy; to pass over its fatal influence on their character, and especially on their spirit of independence; only observe how it removes all check upon imprudent marriages, and tends to multiply the number of the people beyond the means of subsistence—that is, to multiply the numbers of the poor. A young couple who feel inclined to marry, never think, now-a-days, of waiting until they can afford it, until they have a prospect of being able to support a family. They hardly consider whether they are able to support themselves. They know that whatever deficit may arise in their means, the parish must make up; and they take into their account the relief derivable from this source, as confidently and with as little repugnance as if it were a part of their inheritance. It is truly painful to reflect that our peasantry who, some time ago, used to regard such a supply with dread—used to couple every notion of ruin, misery, and even degradation with the thought of coming upon the parish—should now be accustoming themselves to receiving relief almost as if it were a regular part of their wages. I can see but one effectual remedy for this great and growing evil; it is the one which follows so immediately from the principles unfolded in Mr. Malthus's celebrated work. It might be objectionable, on many grounds, to withhold relief from the future issue of marriages already contracted; but why may not such relief be refused to the children born of marriages to be contracted after a certain period? An exception might perhaps be made in favour of those who are incapable of working from age, or other infirmity, though I know not that it would be better to make their claims a matter of right than an appeal to charitable assistance. But persons able to work, and the issue of marriages had after the law is changed, should certainly be excluded. This change would not operate an immediate reform of the system, but the reform would be a perfectly sure one, and it would commence almost as soon as the law passed. If any gentleman is scared at so great an innovation, I will only ask him to survey the enormous amount and odious nature of the evil complained of, and to make his choice between the expedient suggested, and the mischief so severely felt, not, indeed, as it at present exists, but in the still greater extent towards which it is daily hastening.

The next point to which I shall beg the attention of the committee, is the means of relieving the land, and indeed the country in general, from the pressure of taxation, which I have shown to have so great a share in the present distresses. That such relief is within our reach, to a very great extent, I hold to be perfectly manifest. The whole sums applicable to the sinking fund for the last year amount to 15,627,000*l.*, and including the Irish debt, 16,928,000*l.* Of this the financial operations of 1808 and 1813, have appropriated 4,302,000*l.*; there remains undisposed of, 12,626,000*l.*, and the sinking fund on the Austrian and Portuguese loans is 124,000*l.*, which makes the whole unapplied fund 12,750,000*l.* Now, of this large revenue, 6,479,000*l.* arises from the one per cent. upon all loans contracted since 1793. It may be thought consistent with good faith to preserve this portion of the fund entire; and before such a plan as I am now suggesting could begin to operate, it would amount to about six millions and a half. The remaining part of the fund, including the annual grants, and the interest of the other redeemed stock, amounting to 6,271,000*l.*, or at the period in question, to about 6,300,000*l.*, might, I will venture to say, not only without detriment, but with advantage to the credit of the country, be applied to its relief in the remission of the most oppressive taxes. If a sinking fund of six millions and a half is left, operating at a time when there are no new loans, it will produce a far greater effect in the stock market than the whole fund has ever done during war, when much more stock was constantly poured in than the commissioners could redeem. Indeed, this is too large a fund to remain so applied in time of peace, and could only be justified by the notion prevailing in some most respectable quarters, that good faith towards the lenders, since 1792, requires the one per cent. to be left untouched. But for preserving the other six millions and a quarter, no pretext can be urged, especially after the inroads already made upon the fund during war, which have destroyed all idea of its inviolability, in the minds of those who held it sacred. The prospect of the vast benefits which might be conferred on the country by such an arrangement, is so dazzling that I am afraid to trust myself with painting it. Only let the committee reflect for a moment upon the taxes which might be instantly repealed, supposing always that our expenses have been by retrenchment brought within our present revenue. The taxes that press most upon agriculture—those on leather, husbandry horses, and malt, might at once be done away. The most oppressive of the assessed taxes might also be repealed. The bad gains of the lottery, by which money is raised directly at the expense of public morals, might be abandoned. In short, we should have the pleasing task, during the remainder of this session of inquiring what taxes pressed most severely upon the people, or were most pernicious in their effects, and of lightening the burthen to the extent of between six and seven millions. As the remaining part of the sinking fund increased, further relief might, from time to time, be afforded; for surely it never could be in the contemplation of any one who understood the public economy of the country, in its trading as well as financial concerns, that the whole amount of the taxes required by the existing debt should be repealed at once, and the transition made suddenly from a levy of forty-two millions a year to no levy at all. Nor could any friend to the stability of the constitution wish to see the executive government for any period, how short soever, posssessed of that enormous income unappropriated to any service. But they who tell us that the sinking fund is sacred, or rather that it has, since 1813, become sacred—who will not hear of any proposition for gradually reducing it—whom nothing will satisfy but a rise of stocks in a few months to par, the repayment of 100*l.* for every 50*l.* or 55*l.* that we have borrowed, and the continuance of all our heavy burthens until the moment when they may all cease together—those persons must surely be prepared either to show that the taxes now paying for the benefit of posterity are unconnected with the distresses of the present age, or to produce some other means of relieving their country. The question is now at issue between the stock-holder and all the rest of the community, and it is for the committee to say whether they will, at all hazards and costs, take his part, or listen to the only imaginable means of effectually remedying the most trying of the evils we are labouring under.

Before I sit down, Sir, I must advert to the great importance of keeping a most watchful eye over the mercantile and manufacturing interests of the kingdom. It is an inexcusable ignorance or thoughtlessness alone, which can never overlook the intimate connexion between our trading and our agricultural concerns; nor can any thing be more preposterous than the clamour frequently raised on the one or the other side, as if those two great branches of public industry could have interests incompatible with each other. The sufferings of the merchants and manufacturers are hardly less severe in these times, than the distresses which immediately occupy our attention in this committee. It well becomes us to see that they do not increase under the pressure of foreign competition, since the restoration of peace on the continent. Whatever measures may tend to open new markets to our industry, the government is most imperiously called upon to entertain; a more effectual relief can hardly be given to agriculture than such a support extended to the other parts of the community. Let me in this light, intreat the attention of the committee, and more especially of his majesty's ministers, to the trade with South America. Connected as we are with the governments of Portugal and Spain, by every tie that can give one power a claim to favour from another, surely we may hope to see some arrangements made which shall facilitate our intercourse with the rich markets of Mexico, Brazil, and Peru. At present, if I am rightly informed, a considerable traffic is driven with those fertile countries, but under trammels that render it irksome and precarious. It is known that no consuls or residents, either commercial or political, are established in Spanish America; and, indeed, the whole trade is little better than a contraband carried on with a certain degree of connivance. Yet it is difficult to imagine any thing more beneficial to our mercantile interests, than the establishment of a regular and authorized connexion with those parts of the world. The subject is not free from delicacy, in consequence of the efforts making by the Spanish colonies to shake off the yoke of the mother country—efforts, for the success of which every enlightened, indeed, every honest man, must devoutly pray. But wherever the authority of the Spanish and Portuguese governments extends, it may be hoped that some footing will be obtained for our merchants by negociation, while, with respect to the revolted colonies, I trust his majesty's ministers will beware how they carry their delicacy towards the mother country too far, and allow other nations to pre-occupy the ground which our own countrymen ought to have their share of. The Americans are in the neighbourhood; we know their indefatigable activity and vast commercial resources; let us take care, not that we press forward to exclude them from the markets in question—that is impossible; but that we obtain access to those marts for ourselves. It is a subject of vast extent and importance; I abstain from entering further into it; but this I will venture to assert, that the minister who shall signalize his official life by establishing, whether in the old or the new world, such a system as may open to his country the commerce of South America, will render a greater service to the state, and leave to posterity a more enviable fame, than it is in the power of conquest to bestow.

Sir, I have to thank the committee for the patient attention with which they have honoured me. I am conscious that I owe it to the singular importance of the subjects I have been handling; and that, too, is the only apology I can offer for having so long trespassed upon your indulgence.

Lord *Castlereagh* complimented the hon. and learned gentleman who had just sat down, on the ability and temperance with which he had treated this important subject. In the few remarks with which he should think it his duty to trouble the committee, he intended principally to confine himself to those parts of the hon. and learned gentleman's speech, which had more particularly attracted his attention. In the first place, however, he must say, that on a question of such immense importance, he should be very unwilling to be considered as hazarding any conclusive judgment. The subject was of such magnitude and extent, and was liable to be contemplated with such various views, that he felt it his duty to keep his mind as open as he could through the whole course of the discussions which had taken place, and which would yet take place upon it. It would be very easy for the committee to deal with any single practical proposition, and to arrive at a sound judgment with respect to it; but when the question was looked at in the gross—when a picture was exhibited, comprehending all the causes of public prosperity and public distress, the consideration became so complicated, that the boldest politician would not venture to pronounce upon it without the utmost deliberation and anxiety.

The first topic of the hon. and learned gentleman's speech on which he wished to say a few words was, the question of the restriction on cash payments at the bank of England—not intending to bring the whole of that question into discussion, but to confine himself to that part of it, which was, or which was supposed to be, connected with the existing distresses. The hon. and learned gentleman had so far reasoned this question fairly, that he had not imputed to the measure of restriction consequences uniformly unfavourable. On the contrary, the hon. and learned gentleman had maintained, that if well regulated, it had a tendency to produce great prosperity. There was one practical view of the question, which, in his (lord Castlereagh's) opinion, ought never to be forgotten; and that was, that whatever minor inconveniences the restriction on cash payments might have occasioned, it had enabled this country to do all that it had done during the war, and had brought it triumphantly through the various difficulties by which it was threatened. He was sure no man would deny, that had it not been for that measure the country must have sunk under the weight of the power opposed to it, and that it never could have made the efforts which it had made in the course of the war, had it not possessed a circulating medium of such a nature, that it was not exposed to the dangers to which the natural and ordinary circulating medium would have been exposed. This should never be forgotten, whatever might have been the tendency of the measure to occasion abuse—and really there was scarcely any operative measure influencing national prosperity which did not at the same time engender corresponding evils. That it might have led to over-trading, he by no means denied. That many commercial speculations had been entirely founded on a fictitious capital, which of course vanished with a change of circumstances, he was perfectly ready to admit. Those were inconveniences which might not have occurred had the natural circulating medium, and that only, been preserved. But, he repeated, who that knew any thing of the history of the last fifteen years would deny that it was by the operation of the restriction on cash payments that the country had been saved? In his opinion, it was the greatest monument ever erected to the public credit of any country, that the credit of Great Britain had not only endured unshakenly the introduction of this auxiliary and substituted circulating medium—had not only survived it—but had risen superior to the elevation at which it antecedently stood. Under this artificial circulating medium the prosperity of the country had grown, even in war, to an unparalleled degree.

Having said thus much, on this particular subject, he would proceed to consider the main question before the committee. This question divided itself into the nature of the existing distresses, their extent, their tendency, and the remedies which it was advisable to apply to them. He was glad to find that the hon. and learned gentleman was not one of those who were disposed to take too gloomy a view of the nature of these distresses. For his own part, he apprehended that their immediate cause might be traced to the simple fact, that during the last two years, and particularly during the last year, the great and necessary articles of human consumption had been depreciated in value at least one half. The committee knew what effect such a depreciation must produce on any class of the community, when it affected that which constituted the wealth and the means of subsistence of that particular class. But when the change took place on that which formed nine-tenths of the general wealth of the community at large—when it affected not a single manufacturing or commercial interest, but the great mass of the farming property of the empire—the consequences must be proportionably extensive.

The question that came next to be considered, was, how far this depreciation of the produce of agriculture was of a permanent nature. The hon. and learned gentleman had very correctly stated, that it originated in the year 1813. It was natural to expect that the great harvest of that year, and the prospect which the approach of peace afforded, of opening the ports in the Baltic, would expose the farmer of this country, under circumstances of peculiar pressure, to a competition in the market with the foreign grower, free from the heavy burthen of taxation. It was consequently contemplated in 1814, to propose to parliament a measure calculated to avert this danger, and to protect by law the corn grown in this country, against the competition of foreign corn, until the price should arrive to such a point as to insure a fair protection in itself. During that session, however, parliament were not disposed to adopt the proposition in question. He did not state that as a reproach, though it certainly had been against his strong and expressed opinion. That, however, which was at first only alarm, turned soon after into menace. Nor did it stop at menace; for such a quantity of foreign corn was poured into the country, that, added to the abundant harvest of the year 1813, an effect was produced on the prices, which, though very naturally to be expected, was not the less distressing to those who were the sufferers by it. When once a *momentum* was given to such an operation, it was difficult (as had been ably stated by an hon. gentleman in the course of the debate) to say when it would cease. It certainly had inflicted on the country one of the heaviest calamities that could befal a nation. When once a diminution of agricultural property took place in a country, it was not merely that the general wealth was diminished, but the question arose, that most difficult arrangement which must convulse every community, in what way that loss should be distributed so as to be borne with the least inconvenience. It created an immediate conflict between the interests of the grower of corn, and the interests of those from whom he derived the means of growing it; and put the former in a situation in which he became unable to fulfil his contracts with the latter; contracts made at a time when they were justified by the price which agricultural produce then bore. And here he must observe, that although during the high prices of corn many rents had been raised, yet that had not been done generally. Rents had not been disturbed in consequence of the high prices to the extent imagined by the hon. and learned gentleman. If all the bargains concluded between tenant and landlord had been built on those extraordinary prices, the convulsion would have been still greater, and the return to a healthy state of affairs would have been rendered more difficult. On the contrary, in proportion as those bargains were smaller in number, the difficulty of adjustment, and of returning to a desirable state of things, was diminished. The committee were well aware, however, of the great difficulty and evil which had attended the distribution even of the loss that had occurred; and how it led all parties to try to throw as large a portion of it as they could on the exchequer. For this, he by no means blamed them. But in wisdom, they ought not to press beyond the true point, nor withdraw from the state those resources which were necessary for its protection and stability. If they drove their wish to an improper extent, they would only incur evils still more painful than those from which they were desirous to escape. One of his reasons for thinking that the distress, although he admitted that it was great, was not so great as by some it had been represented to be, was, that if corn, instead of falling from 120*s*. or 130*s*. to 56*s*. (the present average price) had fallen only to 80*s*. or 90*s*. no distress at all would have been exhibited. Up to the latest period preceding the change, the agriculture and the industry of the country in all its branches (those true sources of national wealth) were in the highest possible state. The change in the representative value of every article of human consumption had suddenly occasioned the change in that state of activity. But when it was argued that this change would be permanent; when it was argued that 56*s*. a quarter would continue to be the price of corn, he was at a loss to discover on what foundation such arguments were built.

This subject was viewed in very contradictory lights. The hon. member for Essex had stated more boldly than he (lord Castlereagh) thought the facts would bear out, that the agriculture of the country had been carried to such a pitch, that we had produced not only enough for our own consumption, but a considerable redundance of corn. This view of the subject arose, doubtless, out of the circumstances of a particular year. If true at all, it was true only of a single year, and was not at all true of an average of years. The hon. member for Surrey, on the other hand, was so far from admitting that the low prices of corn proceeded from the redundance of produce, that he considered the produce as not equal to the demand; and attributed the low prices to the necessity under which the farmers laboured, of bringing their corn to market at an early part of the year, from which circumstance the hon. member seemed to expect famine instead of superfluity. For his own part, he did not exactly coincide with either opinion. Shut out as a foreign supply of corn was from the country, he could not persuade himself but that the price of corn would gradually rise to 80*s*., and that the profits of the agriculturist would rise with the profits of the other modes in which capital was employed in this country. If no other process had a tendency to produce this effect, it would be occasioned by the simple circumstance, that the charges on the farmer (which were heavy, and which, he admitted, it was most desirable to lighten, if it could be done consistently with the public interests) would of course cause some land to be put out of cultivation. Thence, it was obvious, that this would facilitate the return of prices to their proper state. He did not intend to say that in the meanwhile great pressure would not be felt. There might have been great and imprudent speculations during the facility of employing large capitals which the recent state of the circulation afforded. It was not unlikely that during the high prices, land was put into tillage, of a quality from which, in ordinary cases, no profit could be derived. It was also probable, that during the high prices good land had been abused, and that the soil which, by steady cultivation, might have produced for a course of years a reasonable return, had been forced by the temptation of high prices into an unnatural fertility, which was of course followed by a proportionate barrenness.

But he trusted that all these instances were but exceptions to the general rule. He did not believe that the circulation, occasioned by the restriction on cash payments at the bank, had gone so far beyond the ordinary circulation as to create any very unnatural effect, or to produce any very dangerous convulsion. Nor did he believe that the great mass of agriculture was in a tottering state. On the contrary, he was persuaded, that the great mass of agriculture in this country was founded on a solid basis. It was secured from the only enemy which could beat it down—foreign competition; from the domestic competition arising from the other modes of employing capital, it was also secure; and he was persuaded, that the price of corn would soon return to the state which would afford the grower a fair remuneration. There were no other circumstances in the state of the country which indicated a decay of the national prosperity. He did not mean to deny that there was an immense pressure on the country, and that very considerable difficulties arose out of the peculiar situation in which it was placed. But to allege that this indicated a decay of national wealth and prosperity, was, in his opinion, not to seize the true character of existing circumstances, or to describe the real situation of the country as it stood. Such a supposed deterioration of property, and sacrifice of interests could never exist, without showing itself in a thousand different ways, and in no way more conspicuously than through the medium of the revenue. He had watched the returns of the revenue with the greatest anxiety, in order, if they existed, to discover the symptoms of the case alleged; but he had the satisfaction to say, that down to the very last week to which the accounts had been made out, no such symptoms appeared, but that the revenue, in all its branches, had been fully maintained, and in some of them had considerably increased, as compared with the corresponding periods of former years. He did not state this to refute the fact that considerable pressure existed, or to prevent the committee from attempting to mitigate it. But he entreated the committee to look at the whole state of things with a firm and steady eye, and not to despair of the resources and energy of the country; and he trusted they would speedily see a termination to that general suffering which had arisen from the change of prices. The circumstances which were to produce that amelioration of the state of agriculture were in fact already operating. An hon. gentleman who had spoken early in the debate, had stated that corn had a general tendency to rise over the United Kingdom. He (lord Castlereagh) understood that in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh wheat had risen to 72*s*. a quarter. If it was true, as he believed, that it had so risen in Scotland, no one could imagine that it would long remain at 56*s*. a quarter throughout the rest of the island.

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In his opinion, the major part of the arguments which had been deduced from our situation in 1792 were founded on false assumptions. We were now in a very different situation from that in which we were at that period. Unquestionably we were subject to burthens to which we were not at that time subject; those burthens must affect the prices of all the articles which were the produce of the community at large, but they would not prevent the produce of the agriculturist from finding its level with the produce of the other classes of the community. He saw no reason to doubt that at no very distant period, corn would rise to a fair remunerating price to the grower; and if it should get up to 80*s*. or 90*s*. a quarter, he would be glad to know where would then be the distress? While he said this, he understood and admitted that there was another cause operating at the present moment, which had a great tendency to retard the action of the remedy, and to prevent the price of agricultural produce from rising. Coincident with the extreme depreciation of corn had been an alteration in the state of the circulating medium, which affected the whole credit of the individuals concerned, and impeded the operation of that confidence which was indispensable to them. A large part of that circulating medium had been withdrawn, and had disappeared, and with it (which was the most important consideration) had gone a large portion of the confidence that had heretofore existed. But was this diminution of the circulating medium founded on principles of a permanent nature? Would it admit of no mitigation? The return of peace would eventually lead to the return of old maxims—to the return of those common principles on which the circulation of every country ought to be regulated. All the banks in the country, from the great national bank to the smallest private bank that existed, must feel that the period was rapidly approaching when the country might again possess a larger amount of circulating medium.

His right hon. friend last night, in opening to the House his reasons for proposing an extension of the period during which cash payments were to be restricted at the bank of England, had stated the double object which he had in view, the acceleration of the return of cash payments, and the benefit of the country in the interim. With respect to the first object, he (lord Castlereagh) had last night endeavoured to impress the House with the necessity of not accelerating the resumption of cash payments, until the causes which had occasioned the disappearance of specie had ceased to exist, and until that specie had returned into the country. For, although the bank of England was a very proper instrument to feel the circulation of specie when it actually existed, no corporate body could be deemed a proper instrument to replenish with specie a country like this, when it was drained of all that had once been in circulation. It would, therefore, be a most dangerous experiment to suffer the bank to open their coffers until the commerce of the country had brought back a quantity of the precious metals in aid of their operations. Unless due caution were adopted on this subject, a shock or convulsion would be occasioned much more dangerous to the country than any evils that could possibly arise from the substitution of a currency of another description.

So much for the necessity of postponing the resumption of cash payments at all. As for the period of postponement, if the House did not clearly see its way to the restoration of cash payments in less than two years, it certainly was much better to say so at once, than to make one year the term of the measure at present, with the view of adding another in the next session. Besides, another view of the advantages resulting from this extension of the restriction of cash payments, and from its consequences, was, that it would go a great way towards remedying the inconveniences which the country would otherwise feel by the rejection of the property tax. Whether his majesty's government had been right or wrong in pressing that measure for the adoption of parliament, was not then the question. They had done so on the principle of abstaining for two years from raising any loan, and thus of giving to the country an indirect, and in their opinion a greater relief. Parliament had preferred the direct relief. It would in consequence become necessary to borrow money for the public service, and the extension of the bank restriction act would afford greater facilities for doing so. On the whole he was persuaded that if by this measure parliament gave to the bank of England and to the country banks a confidence which would induce them to act on a liberal, thought not on an improvident principle in their advances, the existing distresses would be in a great measure relieved.

With respect to the last topic touched on by the hon. and learned gentleman, it was too large a question to discuss incidentally, and at that late hour of the night. The hon. and learned gentleman, after considering the various other sources of relief which presented themselves to his mind, had alluded to the expediency of resorting to the sinking fund. He (lord Castlereagh) did not protest against an application to that fund under any circumstances whatever. But he maintained that such an application would be consistent with political and financial wisdom only when the credit of the country should be so raised by the operation of that fund, as to render doubtful the question, whether or not its existence in its then accumulated state was beneficial or otherwise. He hoped parliament would never consent to take from that fund until their judgment was satisfied that the fund, as compared with the debt, was sufficient to defend the public credit from the effect of the debt, and to enable the country to make those exertions, which, at some future period, she might be called upon to make. The sinking fund had saved the country—had carried it through its difficulties; and he trusted parliament would never approach it without a lively recollection of the benefits which it had dispensed. This, he repeated, was too important a subject to be discussed that night, but he entreated the committee to recollect the immense magnitude of the debt, and to consider that if they left the operation to the small progress which a sinking fund of six millions could make on a debt of seven hundred and fifty, they would in fact abandon the notion of making that fund effectually operative.

He begged pardon of the committee for having trespassed so long on their patience, but there was one subject, our trade with South America, which he had nearly forgotten to mention, and on which he begged to say a few words. He had the satisfaction to state, that our present commercial communications with South America were very considerable. There was hardly a port in South America with which we had not a commercial intercourse. No effort, consistent with their duty in other respects, should be neglected on the part of his majesty's ministers to foster this intercourse. Parliament and the country might rely on it, that it was a subject which occupied their constant attention. Great progress had already been made. He was persuaded that South America was a growing market for British produce and manufactures, and no exertion compatible with national honour should be wanting to cherish the connexion.

Sir *John Newport* said, that the war in the Peninsula created a demand for agricultural produce, to a considerable extent, in Ireland. The termination of that war had, consequently, a great effect in reducing the demand. Another source of the present distresses was to be found in the delay of the corn bill, which induced persons to pour as much grain as possible into the market here, for the purpose of avoiding the protecting duties. At the time that this importation took place, the market was already loaded with foreign corn sufficient to supply all England for a year. It also operated to the great discouragement of tillage, and in that way retarded the operation of a measure decidedly beneficial. He differed from his hon. friend, who had moved the resolutions, as to the effects of the warehousing system, which he thought it would not be right to depart from. He doubted the probability that corn would ever be stored to such an extent as to render that apprehension alone a reason for abandoning the principle altogether. He agreed with his hon. friend in thinking that many of the evils were temporary, in case they were provided for by proper regulations, but if left to themselves they would become permanent.

Mr. *W. Smith* rose to take notice of one or two points of the noble lord's speech, without intending to enter into the discussion of the question before the committee at the late hour of the night to which it had extended. One of these points concerned the income tax, and the other the sinking fund; with regard to both of which, he wished to express his dissent from the opinions of the noble lord.

Mr. *Western* made a short reply to that part of the speech of the hon. and learned gentleman who opened the debate, which discussed the effect of warehousing foreign grain. He wished that British capital were applied to the purchase of British grain, and the consequent encouragement of British agriculture, rather than to the importation of foreign grain and the encouragement of foreign agriculture. He argued that nothing was so injurious as rapid fluctuations in the price of corn, and explained the mode in which the measures which he proposed would remedy this evil.

On the motion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the House then resumed, and the Chairman reported progress, and obtained leave to sit again on Monday the 29th instant.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, April 10.

Civil List—Lord Chamberlain's Department.] Mr. *Tierney* rose, in pursuance of notice, to call the attention of the House to this question. He would not detain the House five minutes; nor was it his intention, if the motion he was about to make should be opposed, to go to a division: but his object was, to ascertain why the estimate of the lord chamberlain's department, of the 5th of January, had not been produced. In the report of last year there was an order or warrant directing that the lord steward and the lord chamberlain should, at the commencement of every quarter, deliver to the lords of the treasury an estimate of the expenses actually incurred in that quarter. In consequence of this warrant, he had moved for a return of these estimates, and the result of that motion was, that an account was produced of the expenses of all the quarters, excepting that ending on 5th January, 1816, of the lord chamberlain's department. Having been informed that no such estimate was returned, he had moved for a copy of the correspondence between the lords of the treasury and the lord chamberlain, on the subject of the non-return of the estimates for the quarter ending 5th January. Putting, then, all this together, he could not tell what to make of the transaction; and it was impossible to avoid presuming that there was something connected with this unfortunate affair which ministers were afraid to lay before parliament. He should now move for the production of those papers which had been so omitted, and should anxiously wait for the explanation of the noble lord, as he confessed that at present he was totally at a loss to conceive in what manner this delay could be accounted for. He concluded with moving, "That the estimate of the expenses to be incurred in the department of the lord chamberlain for the quarter ended the 5th of January 1816, directed by the warrant of his royal highness the Prince Regent to be transmitted to the lords of the treasury be laid before the House forthwith."

Lord *Castlereagh* had no objection to the motion of the right hon. gentleman. He would inform the House that there was in the quarter alluded to, no estimate returned to the treasury by the lord chamberlain. There was, in truth, very little difference of opinion upon this subject between himself, and the right hon. gentleman; for he was ready to admit, that it required explanation: but the only question was, at what particular period that explanation should be given. He certainly did not consider that it would be consistent with his duty to give that explanation now, because it could not but be considered as imperfect and ill-timed. It was quite impossible to enter into the discussion of that most important question at this moment, without the necessary information being before the House; and as it was in the contemplation of his majesty's ministers to submit the whole question before the House as soon after the holydays as possible, he was sure the House would agree with him, that any prior discussion would be premature. All he claimed, therefore, from the House was, that it should not now go into the consideration of so important a question at the present period, but wait until the House might, when the proper documents were produced, enter into a full, fair, and deliberate investigation of the whole of the transactions connected with this subject. Certainly there was a considerable arrear in the civil list; and parliament had determined that it was more consistent with public economy not to make any fixed or permanent provision for it, but that the droits of the Crown should be made answerable to supply the deficiencies in that provision. Thus the question stood; and it now became necessary that parliament should take the whole subject under its consideration, in order that it might be determined what amount of provision should be allowed to answer the various expenses incurred under the title of the civil list; and here he wished the House to recollect, that it was not only to preserve the dignity of the Crown that this money was voted, but there were various other expenses incurred, of which the maintenance of foreign ambassadors formed only a small part, and of which it was impossible the House could have any conception until the question should be fully investigated. The right hon. gentleman, he hoped, would be satisfied that it was the wish, the ambition of government, to meet this question in the fairest manner, and to give the fullest information to parliament. He believed that that had always been the system of his majesty's ministers; and, as far as he could recollect, the right hon. gentleman had not called for a single paper on this question that was not produced. It had, indeed, been proposed to go into a minute detail of these circumstances, and it had been refused as tending to prejudge the question; but he would venture to affirm, that not a single paper which had been moved for was refused. He hoped, therefore, the House would feel, that in declining to give this explanation, it did not arise from any difficulty in giving it, or from any doubt but that at the proper time it ought to be given; but that it arose from a desire not to prejudge so important a question, and also to deprecate this personal mode of inquiry, which was too much the habit of hon. gentlemen over the way. He would not permit this personal dictation of the right hon. gentleman to induce him to swerve from his duty; nor could he, as the right hon. gentleman seemed so much to desire, erect him into a House of Commons, and listen to his opinions as being those of the whole House. When the proper time should arrive, therefore, he should feel himself bound to give that explanation so much desired and in the mean time, he should not oppose the motion for the production of the papers.

Mr. *Tierney* expressed himself as being not at all satisfied with the answer of the noble lord. His (Mr. Tierney's) object was to make a separate question of this particular estimate, and afterwards to discuss the whole subject; and he would put it to the House, whether it was too much to ask of the noble lord to give an explanation why a certain document was not produced? Was it prejudging the question? Was the House to remain in the dark, just as long as the noble lord pleased, upon so important a subject? He believed it did not require much foresight to discover that there was some unknown mystery, some secret not to be divulged, which the noble lord chose to keep to himself. If lord Hertford had a seat in that House, he had no doubt but that he would assign the true reasons for this extraordinary proceeding, and why his majesty's ministers did not force this quarterly estimate from him. When the proper time did come, he defied ministers to give a satisfactory explanation to the House why the estimate had not been produced: and the noble lord had now very coolly told the House, that no such estimate had been made by the lord chamberlain to the treasury, but that he would reserve his explanation until some future period. On Monday, the 6th of May, he should move to refer this most important question to a committee, for the purpose of inquiring into and fully investigating the whole subject; and he conceived he should be the more justified in making this motion after what had fallen from the noble lord that night: it certainly did furnish him with an unanswerable argument for the appointment of such a committee. The House could not be much prepossessed in the noble lord's favour, when he refused to give any explanation why a document was not laid before the House which should have been produced some months ago. He sincerely hoped that a satisfactory explanation might be given; but he very much feared that the noble lord would entirely disappoint their expectations, and it would then be for parliament to consider what steps should be taken on this most interesting and important subject.

The motion was agreed to.

MOTION FOR ACCOUNT OF SUMS CLAIMED FROM FRANCE ON ACCOUNT OF PRISONERS OF WAR.] Mr. *Hammersley* rose to move for an Account of the sum due from the French to the English government for the maintenance of prisoners of war, which had been remitted by the treaties of peace in 1814 and 1815, to favour the claims of those who had suffered from the confiscation of property placed in the French funds. He said, he could not approve the arrangement which had been made in this instance, as he thought it went to give up that which belonged to the community at large in favour of individuals who were not entitled to such an especial favour for placing their money, if not in the funds of our natural enemy, in those of our natural rival, which came to much the same thing. Though the question on the peace had been already decided, as it was impossible the House could have fully considered the seventy treaties which had been presented to them, he apprehended he was not precluded from offering any observations that might suggest themselves to him by that circumstance. Many of the treaties reflected great honour on the noble lord who had negociated them; but the arrangements to which he now called the attention of the House, appeared to him particularly open to objection. The individuals in favour of whom the public claim had been given up, were not entitled to such consideration, and the great expense attendant on the commission appointed to prosecute the claims of the individuals alluded to in France, which, as much French law was to be gone into, would probably be continued for four or five years, was that with which the country ought not to be charged. The hon. gentleman then made his motion.

Lord *Castlereagh* said, that the decision of the House on the treaty of peace certainly could not preclude any hon. member from bringing forward a question like the present. He had no wish to plead this in bar to the motion, but at the same time he thought it right to state the difficulties in the way of making a satisfactory return to it. The account made out by the English government for the maintenance of French prisoners of war, could certainly be produced, as also the counter-statement given by the French government, but these would not give the hon. gentleman the balance due to Great Britain. It had long been a point of difference between the two countries, what was due to each other on account of prisoners of war; the French government having constantly charged the English with the expense of prisoners, which they contended were in our service, but which the ministers of this country had contended we had in fairness no right to bear. In 1814, it was thought desirable to set this question at rest by the arrangement then concluded. The probability of the discussion on this question being trailed on for years, if this step had not been taken, as in other cases where the accounts of prisoners of war were under consideration, had partly induced them to act as they did. At the conclusion of a peace this country had not usually been very successful in getting its claims of this nature satisfactorily adjusted; and it was the feeling that this was not to be viewed as a very solvent debt, that had induced them to give up those claims which the hon. gentleman seemed to think ought to have been enforced. The individuals who had been benefited by this arrangement were entitled to such relief, from the circumstance of their having placed their money in the French funds, on the faith of a solemn treaty to which the English government was a party, and their claims had been recognized in the Treaty of Amens, which recognition had been renewed in the treaty of peace made in 1814. The treaty under which they had placed their money in the French funds, was one by which it was agreed, that in the event of a war breaking out between France and England, the subjects of either country residing in the other should be allowed one year to dispose of their property. In defiance of this stipulation, however, when war again broke out, the property of English subjects in France had been sequestered. The claims growing out of this transaction had been settled by the treaty of Amiens, but that settlement the short duration of the peace made useless to the British creditor. The subject had in consequence of this been again taken up in 1814, and subsequently on the same principle in the late treaty. It could have been wished, that the claims of British subjects on other powers, acting under the control of France, at various periods, who had confiscated their property, should also have been satisfied, but this could not be effected, and the claim had only been enforced against that country which had acted this part in defiance of a solemn treaty existing between the two nations, which treaty had been concluded with the family now happily restored to the throne of France. The fact of the treaty in question having been made by the Bourbons, had furnished him (lord Castlereagh) with a stong argument in favour of the claimants, and had influenced the decision of the French government. In this instance, as in every other, the conduct of that government manifested a sincere desire to fulfil the engagements into which it was induced to enter; and it was but the day before yesterday, that he had received a letter from the commissioners now in France, bearing testimony to the great fairness displayed by the French commissioners, and expressing the utmost satisfaction at the progress already made in the business which they were appointed to adjust. He repeated the statement, that such was the conduct of the French government in every case. What they had engaged to do was most punctually performed, and they were not in arrear for one single payment which they had agreed to make to any of the allies. With respect to the expense of the commission for prosecuting the claimants on account of property which had been placed in the French funds, he did not think the country would complain if it were called upon to bear the whole of it. At the same time he had considered it to be the duty of government to guard against this, and to throw the charge of the commission on the individuals who profited by the arrangement. He did not think they could refuse to pay this, on recovering that property which at one period few expected would ever be restored to them.

Mr. *Tierney* thought the best mode of arranging this business would have been to have made it a condition of the peace, that so many millions as were due on this account should be paid by France to England. He had never heard it disputed that a large balance was due to this country in 1814. He had heard it amounted to no less than 7,000,000*l.* He did not know that this was correct, but he believed this sum had been given in to the French government in 1814, as that which was due to England. Why had not this demand been settled at once? The fact was, the noble lord thought it impossible to do this, and obtain a large sum as an indemnity at the same time, and he had thought it more creditable to his negociation that the indemnity should be pressed, than that the claims of the British creditors should be enforced; seeing that he had always been talking of "indemnity for the past, and security for the future." The noble lord had therefore stipulated, that a sum should be paid to this country as an indemnity, and left the other question to be subsequently discussed by commissioners of the two countries. He (Mr. Tierney) was one of the claimants, and though it would be speaking against his own interest, he must say, he did not know why his claim ought to be recognised by the English government. The noble lord had told the House, that the expense of the army stationed on the French frontier was to be entirely defrayed by the government of France, and that the sum of 5,000,000*l.* was to be paid to this country under the head of "Indemnity." He should now proceed to state to the House what was the real result of the treaty of the noble lord in a pecuniary point of view. Of the sum paid as an indemnity to the allies, the share of this country was 120,000,000 of livres. Of these the government had thought proper to distribute 25,000,000 of livres, about 1,080,000*l.* sterling, to the troops engaged in the battle of Waterloo, and who had been present at the capture of Paris. He had some objection to ministers thus taking upon themselves to reward the army; but on this subject he would not at present enlarge. All he should say was, these twenty-five millions of livres thus disposed of had not been carried to the credit of the country. These put out of the question, the total sum to be paid by France in five years, including the charge of the army stationed on her frontier, was 153,000,000 of francs. On this head there could be no doubt or dispute. This sum, reduced into English money, amounted to 6,398,000*l.* This was the sum to be received from France, if the stipulated payments were regularly made during the five years: the expense thrown on this country by the army to be kept up in France (deducting the charge for additional pay on account of length of service) amounted to the sum of 942,000*l.*; to this was to be added the charge for the ordnance, 107,000*l.*; allowance for forage, &c. 30,000*l.*; for the rations, on the new regulations, 30,000*l.*; increased allowances to officers, according to their rank, 30,000*l.*; hospitals and medicines, 20,000*l.*—making in all, 1,159,000*l.*

It would thus be seen, that the annual outgoings occasioned by the maintenance of this army, amounted to about 1,160,000*l.*, to speak in round numbers. This being the annual expense, if multiplied by five, it would give a total charge of 5,800,000*l.* to be incurred by the country on this account in the five years. Let this 5,800,000*l.* be set against the 6,398,000*l.* to be paid by France, and it would be seen, that the whole sum which this country would receive as an indemnity, was 598,000*l.* This was the sum applicable to the service of the country, over and above the outgoings caused by the maintenance of the army in question. We were to receive as an indemnity this 598,000*l.*, and not one penny more.—He had been a little staggered at finding, when the ways and means of the year were brought forward, no mention made of the sums to be received from France. He could now account for the omission.—He should next proceed to show the progress of the expense in the five years, and the manner in which the indemnity was to be received. In doing this he should correct a gross misconception which had got abroad. By the arrangement made with the allies, England, in the present year, would receive 892,000*l.*; the outgoings, he had shown, would be 1,160,000*l.*; here, it would be seen, was a deficiency of 276,000*l.*; in the next year we should receive still less—the sum paid by France would be but 595,000*l.*, leaving a deficiency of 564,000*l.*, and making, with that of the present year, a total deficiency in the two years of 831,000*l.*

But the noble lord said, go to the third year, and see how we shall get on then, when we are to receive the entire proportion of the indemnity to be paid to England.—In the third year, in 1818, we should receive from France 1,636,000*l.*; this set against the outgoings, which he had stated at 1,160,000*l.*, gave a surplus of 476,000*l.*; this deducted from the deficiency on the two years of 831,000*l.* left a deficiency on the first three years of 355,000*l.* In the fourth year the receipts would be the same as in the third, 1,636,000*l.*; the surplus, 476,000*l.* Deduct from this the deficiency on the first three years, and there would remain an actual surplus of 121,000*l.*

This was the indemnity of which the public had heard so much, which it would be seen in the first four years did not give 5 per cent. interest on the sums which must be previously advanced, and till the fourth year nothing would in fact be paid to England. In the fifth year we should again receive 1,636,000*l.*, giving a surplus over the outgoings of 476,000*l.*; this added to the surplus of the preceding year of 121,000*l.* made a total surplus of 597,000*l.* This 597,000*l.* was the whole sum which we should receive in lieu of the indemnity of 5,000,000*l.* talked of by the noble lord. These figures, he believed, could not be overturned; and this was the result of the treaty concluded by the noble lord, which had been so much praised, supposing the army to be maintained in France were kept up, and the payments of the French government regularly made. If, unhappily, the relations of amity now established should terminate in the first, second, or third year, the balance, instead of being for, must be against this country.

Lord *Castlereagh* said, that the right hon. gentleman had not given due attention to what had been stated by him on former occasions. He had never entertained or expressed the idea that the contingent of contribution allotted for the use of our troops would be sufficient for their maintenance. He had stated, on the contrary, that the contribution supplied by France for supporting the allied army of occupation was calculated upon the average of allowance made to continental troops, and that the expenses of the British army would exceed that average. What he contended for on former occasions, and what he was still ready to maintain was, not that a large sum would come into the pockets of the public from the French contributions, but that the ordinary and extraordinary advances from that country would enable us to support an army there for securing the peace of Europe without any charge upon our own revenue. It was no small sacrifice to France to be obliged to pay 30,000 men for the general benefit; and it was no small relief to our resources, that we were enabled to accomplish this end without incurring any additional expenditure. Suppose the case had been different, and that we had been required to keep the same number of troops on foot at our own charge, it might still have been good policy to have done so, but it certainly would not have been so advantageous. By putting this supposition to ourselves, the benefit of the present arrangement would be apparent. The right hon. gentleman was inaccurate in his financial statements, as might be shown by entering upon them: but he (lord C.) would not do so, as he was satisfied, and hoped the House would be so, with the general result. When he mentioned the sum of 153 millions of francs as the whole of the French contributions, he had forgotten the sums raised and applicable to the service of the country before the signature of the treaty. He would not, however, enter into these details, as all that he contended for was gained by the admission that we could support our contingent of the army of occupation without imposing new burthens upon the country, and that we made France pay for warding off the danger which might be apprehended from the convulsions to which she was exposed.

Mr. *Baring* said, it now appeared at last, that all the indemnity obtained from France would be swallowed up in the maintenance of an army, kept up on the frontiers for the security of the existing government of that country. The house had never been informed of the result of our sacrifices, in figures, in the clear manner in which they had been that evening by his right hon. friend. He considered the arrangement made by the noble lord objectionable in every point of view. But his principal object for now troubling the House was, to say a few words on the more limited subject of the motion of his hon. friend. The manner in which the claims of the country had been given up, was another proof of the easy way in which the property of the country was usually thrown away; and he thought that nothing could be more clear than that the noble lord had been over-reached in the negociation of these money matters by the government of France. When the treaties were discussed, this subject had been so much smothered in other more important matters, that it would have been impossible to get the House to attend to it. The return now moved for, would throw light on the subject. Besides giving up the expense of maintaining all the prisoners of war of France, we had also given up the charge for recovering the French colonies after the return of Buonaparté from Elba, for the French government. He believed, if the account were made out with any tolerable degree of fairness, that the balance due to this country would amount to a very large sum indeed, from the immense number of prisoners maintained by us. The noble lord had stated the difficulty of making out any account between the two countries on this subject, from the French in their claims choosing to consider many persons prisoners whom we did not consider as such. But even if we were to have given any sum proved to have been paid by the French government in maintenance of persons detained by them as prisoners, still no sum which could have been claimed from the noble lord, would have amounted to a tenth part of the sum due to this country. The great mass of the persons detained were travellers moving about for amusement, who could not have been fed and clothed as prisoners of war. There could not have been 5000 of them, for whom any actual expense was incurred. He could not help thinking that the noble lord had brought forward these English travellers detained, by way of hiding the real question from them. With respect to the property of British subjects said to have been secured by lord Auckland's treaty of 1786, he contended that even if this property were so secured, it was unwarrantable to give up the property of the public for the sake of sums due to individuals. But in this case there was not a shadow of claim under lord Aukland's treaty. The great mass of the British claims was for property vested in the French funds. The French government, either from necessity or from revolutionary principles, had reduced their debt to one third of its amount; but this measure had not been applied to British subjects alone, but to every person having money in the French funds, natives as well as foreigners. The noble lord had set up a claim for the British subjects for the two-thirds retained from them; but he did not see why a distinction should be made in the case of British subjects, any more than in the case of Germans, Dutch, or Italians. But the principal reason why he objected to the enforcing these claims was, that it established a principle of interference which might afterwards be applied against ourselves. Supposing any arrangement were to become necessary with respect to our public debt—the deferring the payment of the interest, or reducing the rate—should foreign governments be allowed to interfere on the part of their subjects having money in our funds?

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* could not refrain from observing, that among the many singular circumstances that marked the conduct of the hon. members opposite, there were none more singular than the accusations which they had that night preferred against his majesty's government on the subject now under discussion. The first accusation was that government had not enforced against France those claims which ought to have been made for the sums expended in the maintenance of the French prisoners in this country. He did not see on what general principle it was that such a claim should be enforced in a treaty of peace. Was it ever urged as a censure against the ministry that had concluded the triumphant treaty of Utrecht, that such a claim had not been insisted upon in it? Was the treaty with France in 1763 ever complained of on this account? In the circumstances under which the last treaty had been made with France, it was to be recollected, that if our attitude during the negociations were victorious—if our situation were such that we were capable of dictating the terms of the treaty, the other allied powers were in exactly the same advantageous situation; yet they had asserted no such claim. Even Russia, for instance, although from the events of the war she must have maintained such a number of French prisoners as cost her several millions, had made no such claim. But besides this, our claim on this account would have been one which could not have been estimated without the greatest difficulty—the amount of which it would have taken several years to ascertain. And then it was to be balanced against the similar claims on the part of France; and the statement of these would have been attended with still greater difficulties, on account of the great number of prisoners which she had made of foreign troops, fighting in the pay or under the standard of this country. There were no fewer than 100,000 Spaniards taken prisoners in the last war, for whose maintenance the French government might advance a claim on ours. He begged that all these circumstances might be duly weighed. It was by the treaty of 1814, and not by that of 1815, that the transactions relative to the prisoners had been arranged; and by it the claims of the British creditors had been accepted as a compensation for the maintenance of the French prisoners. This arrangement was completed by the treaty of 1815, and the measures were actually settled by which the payments were to be made for the benefit of the British creditors. Commissioners had been appointed for this purpose, and the sum of 70,000,000 of livres had already been actually paid into the hands of these commissioners. Considering the situation in which we stood, by the number of troops which we kept in the French territories at the expense of France, and the number of fortresses in that country which we occupied, it was impossible for him to see what more beneficial arrangement could have been made. If France completed the payments of the contributions, there would be a surplus in our favour after defraying the expense of the maintenance of our troops.—With respect to what had been said of sums expended by us in fitting out expeditions to recover the French colonies after the landing of Buonaparté, it was founded entirely upon mistake. No such expeditions had ever been actually sent from this country. All that had been done was to cause some of the

French colonies to be occupied by the British forces in the neighbourhood of them.—As to the arrangement made with respect to those persons who had property vested in the French funds, it was certainly true that no deduction had been made from their claims of the two-thirds which had been lost by all the public creditors of France, in consequence of that revolutionary operation called the *tiers cassé*. The British creditors of the French nation had been treated exactly in the same way as the French subjects had been treated who vested their money in the British funds; for as with respect to the latter no charge had been made for those taxes which had been borne by the British subjects, so with respect to the former no deduction had been made for that loss which had been sustained by the public creditors of France from the operations on the French funds during the revolution. He knew no principle of greater equity than that which had been acted upon in this case. As for the motion now before the House, it was so worded as to assume the fact, that a balance had actually been struck, and some sum found to be due to this country by France; which was not the fact, as no such balance had been made. There could be no objection to furnish the House with such papers as would contain the necessary information on this subject, and therefore if the hon. gentleman would alter the words of the motion so as not to assume the fact of a balance having been struck, it could meet with no opposition.

Mr. *Hammersley* said, that as far as he understood the treaty of 1786, it contained not one word respecting the claims of British proprietors of French stock. His objection to the measure was, that it was giving up without any sufficient reason a sum which was clearly due by France to this country. As to the objection to the motion from the way in which it was worded, he did not see that it was just.

Lord *Castlereagh* said, the hon. gentleman must be aware, that there was a great difference between making and recovering a demand. The treaty negotiated by lord Auckland in 1786, contained a clause which he conceived must have escaped the hon. gentleman's attention, and which provided for the security of British holders of stock against all sequestration on the part of the French government; and it was upon this principle that the stipulation of the treaty of 1815 was introduced.

Mr. *Brougham* wished to call the attention of the House to a very rash concession made by the chancellor of the exchequer, in his speech upon this question, namely, that there was any resemblance between that nefarious breach of faith with the public creditor of France, which had been made under the name of the *tiers-cassé*, and the tax which was laid upon the holders of stock in this country. No man could suspect him of any partiality to the income tax; but really when he heard any expression let fall with respect to it which could be construed into a comparison between it and a notoriously dishonest act, by which the public creditor of France was deprived of two-thirds of his property —a comparison which would be most gladly laid hold of in France—he could not let it pass without notice.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he should be quite misunderstood if he was supposed to have intended to make the slightest comparison between taxation in Great Britain and the revolutionary trick by which the French stockholder had been deprived of two thirds of his property. The latter was a complete breach of faith—an act of flagrant bankruptcy; the former was a matter of general contribution, sanctioned by law, founded upon justice, and every sound principle of national policy. What he meant to state was this, that one ground of claim by British subjects to receive the whole amount of the sums which they had invested in the French funds, was the extreme liberality by which foreigners were exempted from the payment of taxes on those sums which they vested in the British funds. As the hon. gentleman declined making any alteration in his motion, he found it his duty to propose the following amendment—that the account to be presented should be, "of the sums claimed in 1814 and 1815, for the maintenance of prisoners of war by Great Britain from France, and by France from Great Britain."

Mr. *Tierney* wished to know in what the amendment differed from the motion.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, the difference was this, that the amendment brought into notice the claims of the French government.

Mr. *Tierney*.—Were these claims made for the maintenance of prisoners of war during the time of Buonaparté?

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer*.—They were the claims made in 1814.

Mr. *Tierney*.—I should like to know what claims were made on this account in the negotiations for peace with Buonaparté. It would be curious to see what difference there is between the claims of a legitimate and an illegitimate government.

Lord *Castlereagh*. I see no reason why the curiosity of the right hon. gentleman may not be gratified on this point.

The following motion was at length agreed to: "That there be laid before this House, an account or estimate of sums claimed in 1814 and 1815 by the British government from the government of France on account of the maintenance of prisoners of war, and of the sums claimed from the British government by the French government on the like account, at any period within the last ten years, distinguishing the dates of such claims, and their amount respectively."

PAY OF THE NAVY.] Mr. *Forbes* moved, that there be laid before the House, "a return of the duties performed by the several officers employed in the office of the paymaster-general upon the different foreign stations, with an account of their salaries and establishments." His object in moving for this account was, to see whether some arrangement might not be made for paying the navy on foreign stations. According to the present system, neither officers nor common sailors in the navy received any pay upon foreign stations, in consequence of which they were exposed to the utmost inconvenience. He understood, that the business of the paymasters of the army on foreign stations were now principally transacted by the commissariat, and, therefore, as the establishment of the paymasters-general were to be supported during peace, he thought they might very conveniently be employed in affording the navy the advantage which was enjoyed by the army, of receiving their pay on foreign stations.

Sir *Charles Pole* acknowledged that the public was much indebted to the hon. gentleman who proposed this motion for his zeal in endeavouring to secure for the navy all possible advantages. But when he adverted to the object of the hon. gentleman's motion, which he understood to be to introduce some measure for paying seamen employed on foreign stations through the medium of the paymasters of the army, he considered it to be both useless and dangerous. By the allotment act one half of the pay was set aside for the support of the seaman's wife and family, and one third was allowed to be taken out by himself in slops, besides an additional sum for tobacco. Even if the plan were desirable, could the country support the expense of sending paymasters to every part of the world? He doubted much whether it would be advantageous to the private interests of the sailor, but he was sure, that in a military point of view, it might be productive of the most serious consequences to the country. It might lead to a detention of the men in every port which a vessel of war should enter. Much, he believed, remained to be done in putting the navy on a proper footing; but no advantage, he was convinced, could accrue from the plan of the hon. gentleman.

Admiral *Hope* had no objection to the motion, so far as it went; but as to the ulterior object of the hon. gentleman, it was a thing so completely out of the question, that after the able statement of the gallant admiral who spoke last, he would not have troubled the House at all, only he wished to mention an instance which would show the advantages of the present arrangement, as to the mode of paying the navy. When the British fleet, under lord St. Vincent, was lying off Cadiz, the French fleet put to sea, and within twenty-four hours the British squadron was in pursuit of it. Whereas, if the arrangement which the hon. gentleman talked of had been adopted, and if the fleet was to have received their pay at that time, it would have been impossible for our fleet on that occasion to have been ready to go after the French squadron before the end of three weeks, by which time it would have been too late. At present, the sailor had the means of appropriating his pay to the support of his wife and family, or parents, while he himself was on foreign service, and at the same time wanted for none of the necessaries which he required, whereas the effect of paying sailors on foreign stations would be to tempt them to squander their money, and to forget their wives and children at home.

Mr. *Rose* saw no objection to the motion; but the arrangement contemplated by the hon. gentleman was utterly impracticable, and very unadvisable even if it could possibly be adopted. He could not refrain from once more noticing, that it was a most imprudent thing for members to bring forward motions on such a subject as this, without furnishing themselves with the necessary information; because, when such motions were rejected by the House, and the news of their being negatived was heard by sailors, they were, of course, apt to think that their interests had been neglected. At the same time, he gave the hon. gentleman credit for endeavouring to effect what he conceived was a measure which would do good to the navy; but it was a thing quite impracticable.

Sir *G. Warrender* only objected to the motion because it was the first step towards a measure which was utterly impracticable. All such propositions brought before the House unadvisedly, and without due information, produced very mischievous effects. He moved as an amendment, "That the House should pass to the other orders of the day."

Mr. *Forbes* feared he should appear presumptuous in adhering to his opinions, against the authority of so many persons of high rank in the profession. He was fortified, however, by what he knew to be the sentiments of other officers of equal rank, character, and experience. He conceived it to be a libel on the character of the British sailor to say, that if he were entitled to receive his money, he would not fight the enemies of his country without it. Was it not hard that he should be compelled to serve five or seven years on a foreign station, and during that period not be permitted to draw a shilling of his pay, except in slops, which he was obliged to sell at half their price? The army were in a different situation, and all he wished was to see the same system applied to the navy. He proposed only to suffer the sailor to draw a proportion of his pay, either twice or three times a year. If such a plan was not applicable to the private seaman, there was at least no necessity for not extending it to the officers, some of whom were allowed to draw on the commissioners of the navy, but at a heavy discount.

Admiral *Moorsom* concurred in opinion with those hon. members who had opposed the hon. gentleman's proposition.

Mr. *William Smith* was of opinion that the justice of the case was on the side of the hon. mover's argument. It was not surprising to him that honourable officers should be prejudiced against any innovation proposed in the practice of a profession in which they had been so long and so honourably distinguished. There might still be some points upon which improvement was desirable. Instead of repulsing every proposal of this nature, he could wish to see them attentively investigated by those to whom the administration of naval affairs was confided. To him there appeared to be too much of coercion in the system, and he thought it desirable that the men should be more attached to their service.

Sir *C. Pole* said, that it was assuming a gross breach of discipline among the seamen to suppose they sold their necessaries. It was no new thing for seamen to refuse to go to sea when they were entitled to pay. Not that he supposed they would refuse to go out with the certainty of meeting an enemy—but this was only an extraordinary event, while the ordinary and more laborious business of the service was just as necessary to be performed. It was true, coercion was employed in the naval service, but it was necessary. There was nothing so delightful in a man of war that men would enter without coercion; but the state of the navy during the last ten years, and the emptiness of the hospitals, proved that the men were not badly used. If the system of paying men abroad was adopted, it would be necessary to carry public accountants, of whom he had no great opinion, all over the world. He saw no reason, however, why those officers who were allowed to draw for their pay should lose by the exchange.

Sir *G. Warrender* withdrew his amendment, and said he should vote for the rejection of the motion, as the information required by it was on the table.

The motion was then negatived.

Silver Currency.] Mr. *Grenfell* said, he had before called the attention of the House to the disgraceful state of the silver currency. It was well known that in change for a pound note persons usually received one half in French coin, and the other half perhaps in counterfeit coin made at home. From a conversation with an eminent French merchant, he had reason to believe, that within the last twelve months not less than 200,000*l.* worth of 12 and 24 sous pieces had been imported into this country. It was not surprising that this great importation should have taken place, when it was known that there was a profit of 20 per cent. on these transactions. There was now no reason whatever that the silver currency should continue in this debased state, because that very day silver was at the mint price.

He believed there was an act of parliament existing, which stood in the way of coining shillings and sixpences any where but at the mint, which it would be necessary to repeal, as a preliminary step to the remedy which it was proposed to apply. He concluded by moving, "That there be laid before this House, an account of all foreign gold and silver coin and bullion imported into this kingdom from the 1st of January 1810 to the latest period, as far as the same can be made up, distinguishing each year, and distinguishing the coin from the bullion."

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, the return would be necessarily imperfect, as there was no duty paid on the importation of these articles.

Mr. *Baring* said, he had expected from the chancellor of the exchequer, some assurance of relief to the country, from the nuisance and disgrace under which it laboured at present, from the state of the silver coinage. He hoped something would be done on the subject, before the close of the session. A measure which he should suggest, would be to alter the standard of the silver currency, so that it might not be carried out of the country on every slight variation of the price of that metal. No inconvenience would result from this, because gold should always be looked upon as the real standard of value. By a reduction of the silver coin, to the amount of 10 per cent. the object which he had in view would be answered, and the expense of calling in some of the present currency would be defrayed. This measure would require to be preceded by a committee. No time should be lost in taking some step, and in letting the people know that the foreign coin which was now in circulation would not always be suffered to pass current. He understood that the government was now in possession of a great sum of silver, by which, as by many of their speculations, they were likely to be great losers; but this would facilitate a new coinage. He hoped that when the coinage took place, the mint officers would pay some attention to their work, and take some pains to understand what coinage was. We had a building that cost 2 or 300,000*l.*, and a large establishment, yet such was the disgraceful state of it, that when they had a few tokens to make, the officers knew nothing of the matter, and after many attempts all the dies were broken up. In coining gold for France, they had not improved their reputation, and had concluded by blowing up the mint itself. He hoped the master of the mint would think it worth his while to know a little of his business.

The motion was carried.

Navy Estimates.] On the order of the day being read, for taking into further consideration the resolution which, upon the 1st instant, was reported from the committee of supply, relating to the salaries and contingent expenses of the admiralty office, for 1816: the House proceeded to take the said resolution into further consideration.

Lord *Folkestone* rose to state, that his hon. and learned friend (Mr. Brougham) who had given notice of his intention to make a motion on the subject of the civil lords of the admiralty, was prevented from doing so by unavoidable absence, but meant to bring it in a regular shape before the House after the holydays.

Sir *Charles Pole* expressed his conviction of the necessity of great reductions of expenditure, to enable the country to go on at all. He adverted to the amount of the superannuation and half-pay for the navy in 1791, as compared with what it was at present. At the former period the superannuation and half-pay estimate amounted only to 211,000*l.*, while now it was 1,279,841*l.* being an increase of more than six times its former amount. He dwelt upon the necessity of appointing a committee to revise the whole system of the superannuation and half-pay both of the navy and army, as compared with each other.

The report was agreed to. The report of the committee of supply relative to the salaries and contingent expenses of the navy office for 1816 was next taken into consideration.

Sir *Charles Pole* said, that notwithstanding the assertion of a right hon. gentleman on a former night, that all the accounts of this office were settled, he would affirm that not one single ship's pay-book, had been made up and finally settled since the year 1786. It must be manifest, however, to the House, that there was no check whatever on the clerks in this office until the pay-books of the different ships were made up and complete. He declared his intention of moving for an account of the pay-books that had been settled since the period he had mentioned.

Mr. *Rose* said, his assertion on a former night was, that the books in his office were nine years in arrear when he entered it; that these arrears had been brought up, and that the accounts were now audited up to the very latest period. He was perfectly willing that the hon. admiral should move for any accounts he pleased on the subject.

Sir *C. Pole* replied, that the books he meant were the pay-books of every ship in the service. It was evident that the only effectual check which the public had on the clerks of the navy pay office was, these books, not one of which, he would venture to say, kad been passed during the whole of last war.

Mr. *Rose* asked, was he then to understand from the hon. admiral that no ship-books had been made up since the year 1786?

Sir *C. Pole* replied in the affirmative.

The Report was then agreed to. On the motion, that the resolution of supply, for defraying half pay, superannuation, allowances, and pensions, to officers of his majesty's navy and royal marines, their widows, and relatives, for 1816, be now read,

Sir *Charles Pole* observed, that the question had often been discussed in that House as to what should be the extent of allowance for retirement from office. It must be well known to gentlemen conversant with the public departments, that there were two causes for the retirement of individuals from office, the one arising from their incompetency to perform the duties, and who ought never to have been appointed; the other arising from having served honourably and faithfully a long series of years. In the estimate now on the table superannuations appear, in some instances, beyond the amount of the greatest salary and allowances given to the individual in full execution of his office;—in no case had this House authorized such extravagance and misapplication of the public money. The instances in the paper which he held in his hand were notorious. If the House looked to the 2nd line of the 35th page, they would see 700*l*. to a commissioner of the navy; if they carry their examination a little lower down in the same page, they would find the wife of that commissioner receiving at the same period 300*l*. per annum, making the full amount of the salary of a commissioner of the navy;—proceeding a little further with this estimate, they would find a commissioner superannuated, after a very few years service on 1,000*l*. per annum; and in the same page they would find this individual receiving from the public 500*l*. more, making the sum of five hundred per annum more than the salary of a commissioner in activity. It was possible the abilities of this gentleman were beyond the scope and understanding of his colleagues, and therefore it might be necessary to remove him; but surely, the public had a right to complain of such mismanagement of the resources of the country. These, and many such instances, were to be found in this estimate, and being there he humbly submitted to the House the necessity of a revision of them, or a committee to inquire, in order to prevent such misapplication in future. The hon. admiral then adverted to the army estimates, and said it was impossible to compare the one with the other, without experiencing the most distressing and degrading feelings at the difference which the services of the one were estimated when compared with the other. He instanced the case of the widow of capt. Harvey, who commanded the Brunswick in the ever memorable and glorious first of June: the widow of that officer, who was selected to second the great and good lord Howe, in his gallant achievement of forcing the enemy's line—the widow of that officer, who fell in the execution of his brave admiral's order,—mark, then, how bitter is the comparison;—the widow of captain Harvey and her child shall have 125*l*. per annum. The widow and children of the lieut. colonel of the 20th regiment, commanding the troops at Washington, shall have 1,100*l*. Nay, the relatives of major-general Brock shall have 800*l*.—It was unnecessary to trouble the House with reciting many other cases of a similar nature, such as the widows of captains Duff and Cooke, whose husbands fell in the battle of Trafalgar. One very recent instance appeared—a gallant young officer, who was but lately a member of this House, and who fell on the same service as the husband of Mrs. Ross,—the widow of the one had, as above stated, the widow of the sea officer, 200*l*. ! Such a disproportion was not, he thought, to be borne: it was for this, as well as for many other reasons, that he entreated the House either to appoint a committee to examine the superannuations of the two services, or undertake to revise the present estimate. Proceeding to another branch, namely, the superannuations of petty officers—however friendly he had through life been to this meritorious class, he must say, that unless the warrant officers superannuations were considerably augmented, the petty officers were extravagantly high; for as they now stand, the petty officer might receive 54*l.* per annum, whilst the pay of a warrant officer of a third rate did not exceed 36*l.* or 39*l.* Upon the whole he was most decidedly of opinion, that unless the system was generally revised by persons competent to the undertaking, the public would have great reason to complain of the wasteful and unwarrantable expenditure, and the individuals, in many instances, would be left to suffer under the greatest injustice.

Mr. *Croker* thought it impossible to listen to the hon. admiral's statement without the deepest interest, and without admiring the temperate manner in which he had made it. He hoped, however, that the House would not be displeased, if he undertook to show that the gallant admiral had taken a very erroneous view of the subject. It was not quite fair in him to compare the pensions granted in 1794 to the widows of naval officers, with those given in 1815 to the widows of officers in the army. The only candid mode would have been to compare the pensions granted in both services at the same period, and it would have been seen that exactly the same allowances were made to the widows of officers of equal rank in the army or in the navy. Of the cases referred to, he should begin with that which was first in the order of importance—he meant the case of the widow of capt. Harvey. The hon. admiral had stated, that she had only 100*l.* a-year, and 25*l.* for her child, while the brother of general Proctor had received 200*l.* a-year. Now, it should be recollected that the sum given to Mrs. Harvey was that which was usually granted in 1794 to the widows of post-captains who had fallen in battle, and the army estimates contained pensions to the widows of colonels, granted at the same period, amounting to no larger a sum. It would be opening too wide a door, if the House were to go back to the distant period of the half or quarter of a century, and raise all the pensions which had been then granted. There was no instance of any pension being increased after the period of its original grant. The later grants however had gone on on both services increasing in amount, and the widow of his gallant and lamented friend, sir Peter Parker, had received 200*l.* a-year, and his children pensions of 50*l.* each; a larger sum, he believed, than had been granted to any military officer's widow of similar rank [No, no; from sir C. Pole]. The hon. admiral would find that he (Mr. Croker) was correct. There was no widow of a colonel or lieutenant-colonel who received so large a pension as that he referred to; but the reason was, that no case had occurred similar to that. In the army estimates he remarked that the same pension that was given to Mrs. Harvey, had been given to Mrs. Dauncey, the widow of a lieutenant-colonel, who had been killed in action. It was, in fact, the highest pension then given to the widows of officers of that rank. If the hon. admiral would in this way compare, pound by pound, the pensions given to the widows of officers in the two services, he would find a general correspondence between their different ranks. The complaint of the gallant admiral was therefore not more founded than would be that of an officer in the army who should compare the pensions of the widows of naval officers at the present time with those bestowed on the widows of officers in the army in 1794: and who should assert upon that ground that the widow of a lieutenant-general received only 50*l.* a year, whilst that of a post-captain had 200*l.*—There was another point also to be taken into consideration. It would not be justifiable in the Crown to grant these pensions, without looking a little into the private circumstances of those on whom they were bestowed, and proportioning them to the nature of those circumstances being more or less easy. He could assure the hon. admiral that it was a much more agreeable service to a person in the situation which he had the honour to fill, to be the instrument of bounty, than the channel of refusals: he would be truly happy to see the condition of all those interesting classes bettered if it was thought possible to do so with justice to the public interests, and it was far from his wish to dissuade the House from further extending their bounty, if they saw fit. With regard to the pension of 700*l.* a year to a commissioner of the navy on going out, it was at least a usage of very long standing; and he had to remark, that all the advantages held out were not more than sufficient to induce competent naval officers to undertake the office. He had also to state, that the only two superannuations of commissioners made by the present administration were in the persons of two gentlemen, both of them extremely aged. One of them (commissioner Fanshawe) had been no less than 40 years in the office. As to the rates of pensions to petty officers, it was made imperative on the admiralty to increase them, in consequence of the increased pensions which Mr. Windham's bill gave to non-commissioned officers in the army. He extremely regretted that this bidding for popularity between the two services had been introduced; it formed one of the many grounds on which his hon. friends had powerfully, though unsuccessfully, opposed the plan of Mr. Windham. But, right or wrong, that system had been established, and the increase of navy pensions had been its inevitable effect: for it must be obvious that it would have been quite impossible to propose the taking away of those boons from the British army, at a period when the fate of Europe might be considered as depending upon its prowess. If, then, you could not return upon the army, and take from them their pensions, it became imperative to equalize with them the scale of navy pensions. And, indeed, the argument held still stronger with regard to the navy; for, generally speaking, the seaman, who must be bred up to the profession from his youth, was a much more dependent being when unfit for service than the soldier, who had often his trade to resort to. He was less able to earn his bread when disabled from service. Indeed, ever since he had a seat in that House, he had always heard wishes expressed for the bettering of the situation of the petty officers of the navy, on whom perhaps still more depended in battle than on the non-commissioned officers of the army. And the increase seemed the more reasonable, in the navy as there were deductions made from the pay of seamen for paying these identical pensions.

Sir *C. Pole* repeated his remark as to the hardship of a petty officer having perhaps 54*l.* a-year of half-pay, while a warrant officer had only 36*l.*

Admiral *Hope* stated, that at this moment there was a general survey going on through the country respecting warrant officers in the different ports, with a view to ascertain their rights to superannuation.

Mr. *J. P. Grant* understood, that when the widow of an officer married another officer of the same rank, her pension ceased; but, if her second husband died, her pension did not revive. This was both hard and unjust.

Mr. *Croker* stated, that the pensions were not under the control of government, but of the corporate body of the commissioners for widows pensions. He thought that the occasion stated by the hon. gentleman was very rare indeed; it would only happen when the second husband died within a year of his marriage, and when such a case should occur, he had no doubt the commissioners would recommend to the Prince Regent to grant the widow a pension equal to what she should have had in the first instance, not possessing the power of doing it themselves. In the present estimates a case would be found very much resembling that mentioned by the hon. gentleman, in which that course had been adopted.

Mr. *Forbes* said, that notwithstanding what had been urged by the honourable secretary, it would be found that in point of fact, the pensions granted to the army and the navy, if compared together, relatively to the two periods of 1794 and 1816, were not equal. There were many points in which they differed. In the case, for example, of an officer of the navy losing a limb, or being wounded, he received a pension of only 250*l.*, while an officer of similar rank in the army received 300*l.* He should be glad to be informed of the reason of that distinction. There were other cases of a similar description, in which there was a marked difference between the two services. With respect to pensions granted to the widows of the officers in the navy, he wished to mention a distinction which was a real hardship: in the navy, an officer's widow was obliged to make affidavit, that she was not receiving, in any manner, an income double the amount of her pension. No such affidavit was required from an army officer's widow. The hon. gentleman then adverted to the difference between the half-pay granted to the officers in the navy, and to officers in the army holding corresponding rank. He wished to see the two services equalised in that respect. They had not, indeed, kept pace with each other in any respect. The pay of a lieutenant in the navy was 6*s.* 6*d.* a day one hundred and twenty years ago, and it was no more now—he believed it was less by sixpence. An hon. member, on a former night, when he (Mr. Forbes) brought under the consideration of the House the claims of the navy, styled him the receiver-general of grievances:—he had no wish to assume that office, but at the same time he was anxious to correct a mistake which had gone abroad, as if he had derived his information only from anonymous letters. That was not the fact. He had derived it from verbal communications with all ranks of officers in the navy, from the admiral down to the midshipman. He had, indeed, received some anonymous letters, but even those he was requested not to show, lest the hand writing should be traced, and since the last discussion in that House, many of the persons who sent them, had communicated their names. He certainly should not be deterred from repeating the subject again and again, till greater justice was done to the navy.

Mr. *Lyttleton* believed that no man could oppose the principle, that the services of the navy and the army should be put upon the same footing. Their claims to the gratitude of the country were the same. But he contended, that the principle thus professed was not faithfully carried into execution. Why should a deduction be made from the pay of the navy for pensions to the widows of naval officers. That did not take place in the army. He wished to know out of what fund, beyond the deductions which had been mentioned, the widows of naval officers received their pensions; and out of what fund those of widows of officers in the army were paid? He suggested that length of service, and not rank alone, should form the measure of the pensions given to officers. He objected to the deductions made from the pensions of wounded naval officers, to the amount of 7½ per cent. under the head of the civil list. To this there was no parallel in the case of military officers. He thought the House bound in honour to set the two services really on the same footing.

Lord *Palmerston* said, that nothing could be more plausible than that both services should be placed on a perfect equality in all things. It had always been the wish and intention of government to effect this; but the more the House went into details, the more they would see the impossibility of equalizing, to outward appearance, every branch of the two services. As to the widows' pensions, the two services would not be on an equality, if the propositions of the hon. gentleman were admitted. In the one service a great capital was spent in promotion; in the other it was acquired without expense. In the army the mere interest of the purchase money of commissions amounted to more than the widow's pension; the price of a captain's commission was 1,500*l.*, the interest on which would be 75*l.*; while the pension of a captain's widow was only 60*l.* The price of a majority was 2,600*l.*, the interest on that sum was 130*l.*, and the pension of a major's widow 75*l.* only. It was impossible, therefore, in this instance, to assimilate the two services, unless purchases were taken from the army or added to the navy. The hon. gentleman was mistaken in supposing that the promotion of navy lieutenants was slower than that of captains in the army. Many must necessarily stick at the rank of captain, inasmuch as there were ten captains to two majors.

The report was agreed to.

ARMY ESTIMATES.] On the question that the report of the committee of supply on the staff of the army be taken into further consideration,

Lord *Folkestone* observed, that he was anxious in this last stage to protest against the adoption of the army estimates in their present form. The result had amply justified the opposition given to them in the first instance, when the reply made was, that the proper time for cutting down the estimates was in the committee. In that stage, however, many unanswerable objections were made without effect, as ministers resisted all reduction, maintaining that the House ought to be satisfied with their opinion, that the large military establishment was necessary, because the recommencement of hostilities was a possibility, however distant. In the staff only had any diminution been effected; and although the saving was only 40,000*l.* for the present year, it was enough to show that the estimates in general had been made out in a most careless and slovenly manner. He begged to repeat his strong objections to the ready employment of soldiers for civil purposes: within the last twenty-five years the guards who did daily duty within the city of London had been increased from between 6 and 700 to 8 and 900 men, though no sufficient reason could be assigned for placing new sentries over the people. His jealousy on this point had recently been greatly increased by observing, that on court-days one quarter of the town was placed under martial law, without any authority from the civil power. He begged to refer the House to a case that had occurred under lord chief justice

Holt, to whom a message had been sent, requiring the attendance of one of his officers, to sanction the proceedings of the soldiery in quelling a riot in Holborn. The chief justice inquired what was to be done in case the mob did not disperse on the appearance of his officer, backed by the armed force: and the reply made by the person sent to demand the sanction was, that in that case the soldiers had authority to fire upon the people. "Have they so?" said lord Holt, "then take notice of what I say, for if there be one man killed, and you are brought before me for trial, I will take care that you and every soldier of your party shall be hanged." [Hear, hear!]. This expression was certainly warm, like others sometimes used by that great judge, who had once threatened not only to commit the Speaker, but the whole House of Commons. What he observed afterwards was, however, more important—"Go back," he added, "to those who sent you, and acquaint them that no officer of mine shall attend soldiers; and let them know, at the same time, that the laws of England are not to be executed by the sword: the matter belongs to the civil power, and you have nothing to do with it." He trusted that this opinion would have some weight with the House in introducing it to put a stop to a system by which England was rapidly sinking into the deplorable condition of the military despotisms of the continent.

The Report was then agreed to.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, April 11.

Navy Pay Office.] Mr. *Rose* regretted that some misconception of negligence on his part in the discharge of his duty had been formed by an hon. admiral on a former evening. It was true that the navy pay books had not been made up since 1786, but this arose solely from the difficulty of so doing, not from any neglect on the part of those who should make them up. No blame could attach to the navy commissioners. The opinion of the late comptroller of the navy, whose merits were too highly appreciated by the House to require his eulogy, was in favour of their being made up, though he regretted the pressure of business had prevented that being done. He would not say that no positive loss had resulted to the public in this point, but he assured the House that as soon as the most pressing business was over, the books should certainly be made up.

Sir *Charles Pole* said, that this statement justified the opinion he had formerly given, that no efficient clerks should be discharged till this business had been expedited. It was a matter of very great moment, and would, he trusted, be no longer overlooked.

Petition respecting the Rules of the King's Bench and Fleet Prisons.] Mr. *Brougham* presented a petition from about five hundred merchants and tradesmen in Westminster, against the insolvent act. He wished to extend the object of the inquiry now carrying on by the committee up stairs on this subject, by referring this petition to them. It would be found that the greatest of all possible evils consisted in the very great liberty granted by the rules of the King's-bench, the confinement of which prison was very little indeed. It was a place where an individual went with 3 or 4,000*l.*, and after spending it, took the benefit of the insolvent act. He had known instances of persons going to the continent for three or four months, after giving security to the marshal for their return. That security might be satisfactory to the marshal, but it could not answer the purposes of the creditor. In fact, going to the King's-bench prison was merely taking a lodging on the other side of the river. He believed, had it not been for this abuse, that the complaints against the act would have been very limited in comparison to what they now were.

Mr. *Lockhart* thought the rules were a very great incitement to insolvency.

Mr. *Abercrombie* was of opinion that it was proper to refer the petition to the committee, as it would throw some additional light on the subject. He thought the rules afforded too many facilities of evading the payment of just debts, as he believed many persons had gone thither with an honest intention, but had been prevented from paying by means of the society with whom they associated.

Mr. *Horner* was of the same opinion, and considered the evils of which the petitioners complained to be owing to this last remnant of bad law, the rules of the King's-bench, a system which he thought radically imperfect.

Mr. *Brougham* added, that this abuse could only be committed by rich and fraudulent individuals.

Mr. *Bennet* said, it was common for persons to take the rules of the Fleet in winter, and of the King's-bench in summer.

The Petition was then read; setting forth,

"That the petitioners have recently presented to the House a petition for the repeal of the insolvent debtors acts, and that in such petition they have humbly represented the extensive frauds and injurious consequences arising from the operation of the said acts; that the petitioners are fully convinced that a great portion of the said evils originate from the privilege of the rules of the King's-bench and Fleet prisons, by which imprisonment is commuted for almost an imaginary restraint, and the intention of the law thereby rendered nugatory; that the said rules, by their extent and privileges, are in their consequences destructive of national industry and national morals, especially by the facility they afford to debtors of wasting the property of creditors, which ought to be surrendered on commitment, through which omission a deep and extensive evil arises, by thus placing it in the debtor's power to use it in litigation and profligacy; that it is an unjust and cruel discrimination in making the indulgence of the rules a privilege of property, the poor debtor having to endure close confinement, without the means of purchasing any mitigation, whilst the rich one converts it into a means of hostility to his creditors, and thereby adds aggravation to wrong; that the privilege of the rules not only afford all the convenience and comforts of private life, without any line of difference or distinction known from established householders, in the enjoyment of their liberty and pursuits of pleasure, but also enables them to keep up expensive establishments, in carriages, horses, servants, &c. with all the opportunities of visiting and travelling, not only throughout the United Kingdom, but also to the continent, during a great part of the year; thus rendering imprisonment but a name, affording at once an injurious protection and a greater facility to practices of fraud; that the rules are purchased with the creditor's property, which becomes a source of profit to the marshal, and thus a powerful interest is raised in the debtor's favour, to the creditor's injury, both in respect to the waste of property and abuse of the rules; that the creditor's property is thus made chargeable for an indulgence on behalf of those from whom he has sustained injury, and the marshal reaps emolument without being made chargeable for watching over the debtor's imprisonment, a task now imposed by the law upon the creditor beyond his power to exercise; that it is notorious that many have boasted of having reaped all the advantages of the insolvent acts without having suffered imprisonment; and that many have resided for years, and often for life, within the rules, subsisting on their creditors' property, whilst the law permits the debtor to hold the creditor at defiance, without affording the latter the means by which to compel its distribution; that the abolition of the rules would effectually reduce the number of prisoners, and incline debtors to make a fair arrangement with their creditors; that the losses of trade ultimately fall on the landed interest and capitalist, increasing the price of every article of consumption, and which losses are seriously increased in their retrogressive steps by intermediate sacrifices and charges to a most destructive extent; the petitioners, therefore, humbly implore the attention of the House to the consideration of these serious grievances, the complete abolition of the rules aforesaid, and in compelling an immediate surrender of the debtor's property on his going to prison, by which the whole train of subsequent evils would be materially checked, a salutary terror would operate on the dangerous and unprincipled character, a valuable improvement to the creditor's property, reduction of risk, and general amendment of national morals."

Ordered to be referred to the select committee appointed to inquire into the effects which have been produced by the acts of 53 and 54 Geo. 3, for the relief of insolvent debtors in England.

PETITION FROM HUDDERSFIELD RESPECTING PARLIAMENTARY REFORM.] Sir Francis Burdett presented a Petition, signed by 10,000 inhabitants of Huddersfield and its vicinity, setting forth,

"That a people who make their own laws, either personally or by representatives, are free; but a people who are subject to laws otherwise made, are not free: a free people, through error, either in the making or in the executing of laws, might experience inconvenience or misfortune, but, being free, error would be no sooner discovered than corrected; for no people, who made their own laws, would knowingly injure themselves; neither would they allow their representatives, nor those who executed the laws, nor those who administered justice, to violate their laws and liberties, or in any way to do them wrong; but it is now known, that the people of this kingdom do experience flagrant wrongs and great misfortunes, because their birth-right, of making their own laws, has, through the decay of ancient boroughs, as well as through fraud and usurpation, been taken from them; it being notorious, that the nation are not represented in the House; that by boroughmongers, most of them peers, in whom it is peculiarly offensive, its seats are usurped by wholesale, even by hundreds, and that by wholesale again those seats, through the gross venality of monopolizing corporators, are profligately bought and sold, and that contrary to the sacred principle on which every vote of parliament, equally with every verdict of a jury, ought to be preserved pure and unsuspected, a large proportion of the members of the House, who can only sit there as representatives of the people, are nevertheless placemen and pensioners of the Crown, and as openly as indecently receive, in salaries and emoluments, nearly 200,000*l.* a year out of the taxes; nor is this all: for, by the operation of the septennial act, made contrary to the constitution, and evidently against justice, the entire political liberty of the people, independent of all other violations, is wholly annihilated, for six parts in seven of human life, in this complication of decay, injustice, and wrong, in this utter ruin of the constitution, whereby the people have been defrauded of the self-preserving power of making, through real representatives, their own laws; the House must see the causes of which all the present calamities of our country are the effects, here and here only the cause of war, here the cause of public debt, here the cause of an intolerable taxation, here the cause of trade's decay and paper money, here the cause of a general depravity in morals, here the cause of a million and a half of our fellow-citizens having already sunk into the melancholy condition of paupers, here the cause, not only of silent misery for the want of bread, but of desperation and disorder; and here the cause, that, instead of a remedy being sought in the healing balm of reformation and a restoration of rights, the law, through the resistless power of those who have usurped the seats in the House, assumes a severity revolting to humanity, and is but too often carried into execution by the military instead of the civil power; wherefore the petitioners feel it to be their duty to protest against that corrupt and factious usurpation of seats in the House, by which all freedom is destroyed, and our unhappy country is threatened with convulsion, slavery, or subjugation; for, in a usurpation which inflicts on the whole community taxation without representation, nought but despotism can be discovered; from such a usurpation, nought but ruin can proceed; and as the obvious remedy of political wrong, as the sure preventive against an increase of public evils, as the sole mode of providing for all practicable redress of grievances, and as laying the only solid foundation for secure and permanent peace, the petitioners, on behalf of themselves and of the nation at large, claim, first, representation co-extensive with direct taxation; secondly, that such representation, as a common right, be throughout the community fairly distributed; and, thirdly, that parliaments henceforth have only a constitutional continuance, that is, not exceeding one year; and seeing the House, in whatever relates to the elective and legislative rights of the people, exercises the functions of a court of judicature, they farther claim that justice may neither be denied nor delayed, considering the hateful character of a usurpation which blasts every fruit of the admirable constitution of our country, converting its blessings into curses, and at the same time considering the self-evident rectitude and necessity, as well as the extreme facility to parliament of effecting this reform, the petitioners trust that the virtuous part of the House, and the nation at large, will never relax in their efforts, will never cease, by united exertion, to claim and insist upon those rights and liberties on which the reform depends, until it shall be obtained."

Ordered to lie upon the table.

REPORT ON PRECEDENTS OF NAVAL AND MILITARY OFFICERS ACCEPTING OFFICES OF PROFIT.] Mr. Williams Wynn reported from the Committee appointed to inquire into Precedents of Cases of Naval and Military Officers accepting Offices of Profit from the Crown, and continuing to sit as Members of this House; that they had inquired accordingly; and had directed him to make a Report thereof to the House: and the Report was read as follows:

REPORT FROM COMMITTEE OF PRECEDENTS.

The COMMITTEE appointed to inquire into Precedents of Cases of Naval and Military Officers accepting Offices of Profit from the Crown, and continuing to sit as Members of this House;—have, pursuant to the Order of the House, inquired accordingly, and have agreed upon the following REPORT:

In prosecuting the inquiry directed by the House, your committee have thought it the most expedient course to submit to the House, first, a list of all cases, since the passing of the acts 4 Anne, ch. 8, and 6 Anne, ch. 1, in which the House has directed new writs to be issued in the room of officers in the army or navy, who have accepted appointments of profit under the Crown, which may appear in any manner to be connected with their respective professions; together with, secondly, a list of all such cases, in which the House has either refused or omitted to issue such writs; so far as the same can be ascertained from a comparison of the lists of persons holding such appointments, furnished from the different offices, and the return books.

TABLE.—No. 1.

Stating the PLACE, PERSON, OFFICE, and Date of WRITS ordered.

Arundel. Viscount Shannon, lieut.-general.—Deputy-governor of Dover Castle.—Feb. 28, 1708.

Northumberland. Earl of Hertford, colonel.—Governor of Tinmouth Castle.—February 17, 1710.

Camelford. Bernard Granville, Qy. If an officer?—Lieut. governor of Hull.—February 1, 1711.

Renfrew. Sir Robt. Pollock, Qy. If an officer?—Governor of Fort William.—April 25, 1715.

Castle Rising. Charles Churchill, colonel.—Governor of Chelsea Hospital.—June 10, 1720.

Carlisle. Brig.-gen. Stanwix.—Governor of Kingston-upon-Hull.—April 3, 1721.*

Sudbury. Wm. Wyndham, colonel.—Lieut.-governor of Chelsea Hospital.—April 27, 1726.

Bury St. Edmund's. Thomas Norton, colonel.—Lieut.-governor of Chelsea Hospital, May 7, 1730.

Northampton. Hon. Edw. Montague, afterwards brig.-gen.—Governor of Kingston-upon-Hull.—January 18, 1732.

Bath. George Wade, general.—Governor of Berwick.—January 22, 1732.

Lestwithiel. John Hill, lieut.-gen.—Lieutenant-general of the ordnance.—June 21, 1712.

Arundel. Tho. Micklethwaite.—Lieutenant general of the ordnance.—March 20, 1717.

Totness. Charles Wills, afterwards general.—Lieutenant-general of the ordnance.—April 17, 1719.

Gloucester County. The hon. George Cranfield Berkley, captain in the navy.—Surveyor general of the ordnance.—March 27, 1789.

Dover. Matthew Aylmer.—Admiral and commander in chief of the fleet.—November 26, 1709.*

Plymouth. Sir George Byng.—Rochester. Sir John Leake.—Commissioners to discharge the office of lord high admiral.—November 15, 1709.†

Portsmouth. Sir Charles Wager, rear-admiral.—Comptroller of the navy.—March 25, 1715.

Weobley. Savage Mostyn, captain.—Comptroller of the navy.—March 21, 1748.

Heydon, Charles Saunders, captain.—Comptroller, of the navy.—Nov. 15, 1755.

Plymouth. Sir George Byng, treasurer of the navy, December 9, 1720.

Plympton. Mr. Byng, treasurer of the navy.—April 18, 1724.

Westloe. Sir Charles Wager.—Treasurer of the navy.—December 16, 1742.

Dartmouth. Lord Howe.—Treasurer of the navy.—December 17, 1765.

Dover. Matthew Aylmer, admiral.—Master of Greenwich Hospital.—March 20, 1717.

Rochester. Sir John Jennings, admiral.—Master of Greenwich Hospital.—December 8, 1720.

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* Previous to the order for issuing this writ, a copy of the commission is laid before the House, and entered in the journal; after which a resolution is moved, That the office of governor of the town of Kingston-upon-Hull is an office in the army. The House divided: Yeas, 75; Noes, 81.

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* It is stated in Mr. Hatsell's Precedents, Vol. 2, p. 35, on the authority of Mr. Onslow, that this is the case of a person who had formerly been in the sea service, but had been dismissed from or quitted it. But this can scarcely be correct, as it appears, from an account presented from the admiralty on the same day that the writ is ordered, that Mr. Aylmer had held precisely the same commission in the year 1708. He is also called admiral Aylmer in the vote appointing the committee of privileges on the 22d November 1708.

† This appears to have been the uniform practice ever since, and on account of the number of instances, no others are inserted.

Hythe. Hercules Baker, captain.—Treasurer of Greenwich Hospital.—March 29, 1736.

Captain Philip Cavendish, appointed treasurer of Greenwich hospital on the 20th of April 1721, appears to have been returned for the Borough of Beeralston, on a new writ ordered April 14, 1721, but on petition is declared not duly elected. Sir Charles Saunders was appointed to the same office, April 11, 1754. Parliament having been dissolved on the 8th of April.

TABLE.—No. 2.

Governors and Lieutenant Governors of Forts.

Proceedings in the Case of General Carpenter.

February 21, 1716. "The House being informed, that lieutenant-general George Carpenter having, since his election, accepted of a commission from his majesty, constituting and appointing him governor of the island of Minorca, and the town and garrison of port Mahon, and the castle and forts, and all other military works and fortifications thereunto belonging, or elsewhere situated in the said island, desires to know the sense of the House thereupon, whether he may sit in the House, in respect of the Act 8 * Annæ Reginæ, cap. 4, sec. 26, &c. The said act was read. Then the commission and instructions were produced and read. After which, the sense of the House being that it was a military commission, the said lieutenant-general came into the House."

Proceedings in the Case of Lieutenant-General Wade.

June 9, 1733. "The House being informed that lieutenant-general Wade, a member of this House, hath, since his election to serve in this present parliament for the city of Bath, in the county of Somerset, accepted the office of governor of Fort William, Fort Augustus, and Fort George, in that part of Great Britain called Scotland; and the opinion of the House being desired, whether, by the acceptance of the said office his seat in parliament became void: And the 29th section of the act, made in the fourth year of the reign of queen Anne, intituled, "an act for the better security of her majesty's person and government, and of the succession to the Crown of England in the Protestant line," being read: A motion was made, and the question being put, that a committee be appointed to search precedents, as to the seats in parliament becoming vacant, of officers in the army, being members of the House of Commons, by their having commissions to be governors, or lieutenant-governors, of forts, citadels, and garrisons, in Great Britain; it passed in the negative.

"Then the Journal of the House, of the 28th day of February, in the seventh year of the reign of queen Anne, in relation to the making out a new writ for the electing a burgess to serve in parliament for the borough of Arundel, in the county of Sussex: And the Journal of the House, of the 17th day of February, in the ninth year of the reign of queen Anne, in relation to the making out a new writ for the electing a knight to serve in parliament for the county of Northumberland: And the Journal of the House, of the first day of February, in the tenth year of the reign of queen Anne, in relation to the making out a new writ for the electing a burgess to serve in parliament for the borough of Camelford, in the county of Cornwall: And the Journal of the House, of the 25th day of April, in the first year of the reign of his late majesty king Geoge the First, in relation to the making out a new writ for the electing a commissioner for the shire of Renfrew: And the Journal of the House, of the third day of April, in the 7th year of the reign of his said late majesty, in relation to the proceedings of the House in the case of brigadier-general Stanwix, a member of this House: And the Journal of the House of the 18th day of Jan. last, in the present session of parliament, in relation to the making out a new writ for the electing a burgess to serve in this present parliament, in the county of Northampton: And the Journal of the House of the 22d day of January last, in the present session of parliament, in relation to the making out a new writ for the electing a citizen to serve in this present parliament for the city of Bath, in the county of Somerset;—were read:

"And a motion being made, and the question being put, That the accepting a commission of governor or lieutenant-governor of any fort, citadel, or garrison, upon the military establishment of his majesty's guards and garrisons in Great Britain, by any member of this House, being an officer in the army, does vacate the seat of such member in this House; The House divided: Yeas, 18; Noes, 96; so it passed in the negative."

Since this vote there is no instance of a new writ issuing in the room of any officer appointed to be governor or lieutenant governor of any fort, &c. Field marshal sir Robert Rich was appointed governor of Chelsea Hospital on the 6th of May 1740, being at that time member for the borough of St. Ives; and no new writ was issued. Lord George Henry Lennox being appointed constable of the Tower of London, and a copy of his appointment being laid before the House, on the 3d March 1784: "A motion was made, and the question being put, That the acceptance of the office of constable of the Tower of London, by lord George Henry Lennox, being an officer in the army, does vacate his seat as a member of this House; it passed in the negative."

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* So in the printed Journal. It should be: —4 Anne, cap. 8.

ORDNANCE.

Master-General and Lieutenant-General.

Proceedings in the Case of General Wade.

June 22, 1742. "The House being informed that general Wade (a member of this House) hath, since his election to serve in this present parliament for the city of Bath, in the county of Somerset, accepted the office of lieutenant-general of his majesty's ordnance: and the opinion of the House being desired, whether, by the acceptance of the said office, his seat in parliament became void:—And a motion being made, and the question being proposed, That the accepting the office of master-general or lieutenant-general of his majesty's ordnance, by any member of this House, being an officer in the army, does vacate the seat of such member in this House:—The House was moved, That the 28th section of an act, made in the 6th year of the reign of queen Anne, intituled, An Act for the security of her majesty's person and government, and of the succession of the Crown of Great Britain in the Protestant line, might be read:—And the same being read accordingly:—And the question being put, That the accepting the office of master-general or lieutenant-general of his majesty's ordnance, by any member of this House, being an officer in the army, does vacate the seat of such member in this House;—it passed in the negative, *nem. con.*

SURVEYOR-GENERAL.

The hon. James Luttrell, a captain in the navy, is stated to have been appointed surveyor-general of the ordnance on the 22d May, 1784. He appears to have been returned for the port of Dover in the parliament which met on the 18th of May in that year; but no new writ was issued.

Governors and Masters of Greenwich Hospital.

Proceedings in the Case of Sir William Gifford, Knt.

February 10, 1710. "The House being moved, to take into consideration the case of sir William Gifford, knight, who has been adjudged duly elected to serve in this present parliament for the borough of Portsmouth, in the county of Southampton, whether he, being governor of Greenwich hospital, is capable (according to the act, 6 Annæ Reginæ, for the security of her majesty's person and government, and of the succession to the Crown of Great Britain in the Protestant line) of being a member of the House of Commons;—The act was read.—Ordered, That the constitution of Greenwich hospital, and also the patent constituting sir William Gifford governor thereof, be laid before this House."

February 12, 1710. "The House being informed, that a person from Greenwich hospital attended, he was called in; and, at the bar presented to the House, the constitution of the said hospital; and also the commission to sir William Gifford, to be governor;—and then withdrew.—And the said constitution was read.—And it appeared, that the constitution of the said hospital, whereby the governor thereof was appointed, was before the act of 4th Annæ Reginæ, for the security of her majesty's person and government, and of the succession to the Crown of England in the Protestant line.—After which sir William Gifford came into the House, and took his place."

Admiral lord Archibald Hamilton, appointed March 26, 1746, had been elected for the borough of Clifton Dartmouth Hardness, upon a new writ, ordered March 16, 1741-2.

Admiral sir George Bridges Rodney, appointed December 3, 1765, had been returned for Penrhyn, in the parliament which met November 3, 1761.

Admiral Holburne, appointed February 6, 1771, had been re-elected for Plymouth on a writ issued Feb. 21, 1770. Notice of his death in the Gazette, July 20, 1771.

Sir Charles Hardy, appointed September 23, 1771, was elected in his room for Plymouth.

Viscount Hood, appointed April 13, 1796, had been elected for Westminster in the parliament which met November 25, 1790.

MARINES.

Admiral Boscawen having been elected in the parliament which met on the 31st of May 1754, member for the borough of Truro, was appointed in 1759 general of marines; but no new writ was issued in consequence.

Several other naval officers have since accepted similar commissions of different ranks in the marines, without having vacated their seats in parliament.

Previous to the new establishment of the marines in 1759, there are three instances of members of parliament accepting the office of paymaster of marines, and new writs being ordered in consequence; viz.

Flint County. Sir Roger Mostyn.—Dec. 10, 1711.
Monmouth County. Mr. C. H. Williams.—Dec. 4, 1739.
Whitchurch. Mr. J. Selwyn.—Dec. 19, 1746.

But since that period no such instance has occurred, though that office has frequently been held by members of parliament.

The Report was ordered to lie upon the table, and be printed.

The House adjourned to Wednesday the 24th instant.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, April 24.

Petition from Cornwall respecting Public Economy, &c.] Sir *W.*

Lemon, in presenting a petition from the freeholders and other inhabitants of Cornwall, stating the distresses under which they laboured, and the breaches of faith on the part of government which they had experienced, and praying that the most rigid measures of Economy might be resorted to for the purpose of relieving them, said that he had the authority of the sheriff of the county to declare, that the meeting from which the petition proceeded was most numerous and respectable, and that not a single dissenting voice was heard against the sentiments which it contained.

The petition was then read, setting forth, "That, to support the war which has just been terminated, the petitioners, together with the rest of their countrymen, have cheerfully submitted to the most severe and unprecedented privations; that as they have been taught to believe, by the speech from the throne and the address of the House, that all the objects of the war have been obtained by the success of our arms, and secured by a safe and honourable peace, the petitioners beg leave to represent, that they have a right to expect that their privations shall cease, that our war establishments shall be broken up, our war taxes taken off, our military habits suffered to fall into disuse, and our remaining burthens materially lightened, by the adoption of a system of the most rigid economy and retrenchment in every department of the public expenditure; such a system of economy and retrenchment they consider as not only justified by the event of the war, and the conditions of the peace, but as indispensably necessary to enable the nation to pay the interest and redeem the capital of its debt, and to save itself from the probable effects of that dreadful state of embarrassment and distress into which it has been plunged; after the numerous and forcible representations of that distress which have been made from all parts of the country to the House, the petitioners presume that its existence will not be denied, and can hardly be exaggerated; it has been and still is felt in the depreciation of every article of landed produce, in the general stagnation of internal commerce and manufactures, in the suspension of credit and payments between man and man, in the failure or reduction of rents, in the increased number of bankruptcies, in the want of employ for the labouring poor, and the consequent increase of parochial taxation; the petitioners have therefore seen with indignation and surprise the hopes of the nation, heightened and confirmed as they had been by the recommendation of economy from the throne, disappointed, and the promises of the government broken or evaded, whilst the just complaints of the people have been disregarded by the ministers of the Crown, as proceeding from an irrational impatience of taxation; an attempt has been made to force upon the country an odious, unequal, and unconstitutional impost, in defiance of the declared and unequivocal sense of the people, and in violation of the plighted faith of the ministry and the parliament, and though they have been compelled to abandon their design, they still persevere in a peace establishment oppressive from the absence of any actual necessity for it, ruinous from its disproportion to the resources of the empire, and from its objects and probable consequences dangerous to the liberty and constitution of the country; as a standing army has ever been a subject of constitutional jealousy with Englishmen, the proposal to keep on foot a force of 150,000 regular soldiers ought not to have been made to a free parliament, or without remonstrance submitted to by a free people; that the alleged pretexts for this most unconstitutional measure are either unsatisfactory or odious, having found the laws always cheerfully obeyed, and the civil power fully adequate to the maintenance of good order; and relying upon our insular situation, on the invincible prowess of our navy, and the free spirit of the people, the petitioners cannot admit that a large military force is necessary in Great Britain for the purpose of external defence or internal peace; they cannot but think, that if 25,000 men be necessary for the internal tranquillity of Ireland, an immediate inquiry into its present state, and the causes which have produced it, is absolutely necessary; neither can they think that by force of arms we can compel the French people to submit to a government not chosen by themselves, without trampling on the inalienable rights of mankind, without denying the justice of our own glorious revolution, and impeaching the title of the house of Brunswick to the throne of these realms; they, therefore, humbly pray the House to inquire into and remedy all abuses in the state, to retrench all unnecessary expenses, and introduce the most rigid system of economy in every department of the government, and especially to reduce our immense standing army on a scale consistent with the resources of the empire and the genius of the constitution, that the House will abolish, as soon as possible, places without service and pensions without merit, and regulate the salaries of the servants of the Crown, and other public officers, by a standard conformable to their services, to the circumstances of the times, and the distresses of the people."

On the motion that the petition do lie on the table,

Mr. *Tremayne* observed, that in one part of the petition, that in which the petitioners complained of faith having been broken with them, he by no means concurred; but that he cordially coincided in the wish expressed for retrenchment and economy in the various departments, civil and military, of the public service.

The petition was ordered to lie on the table.

Petition from Dumfries respecting British Prisoners in Spain.] Mr. K. Douglas presented a petition from the corporation and inhabitants of Dumfries; setting forth, "That the House, it is believed, know that seventy persons, subjects of the United Kingdom, have lately been accused of being concerned with the insurgents in South America, and condemned to suffer death, but it is reported they are transmitted to Old Spain, to await the award of his most catholic majesty, the king of Spain, and are now on their passage to that country; the petitioners, from the common feelings of humanity for their countrymen, in a situation so critical, presume to solicit the immediate interference of the House in any way they shall, in their wisdom, think proper, for the protection, and to obtain the liberation of those truly unfortunate subjects of Great Britain; one of whom, they understand, is a young gentleman named Wellwood Hyslop, a native of Dumfries, and connected with many of the most respectable families of that country, than whom none have been more loyal to the government, or more honourable and respectable in society; they therefore most earnestly intreat the humane attention of the House to the very claimant case before stated."

Lord *Castlereagh* said, that application had already been made to the Spanish government on this subject, and that the connexions of the individuals in question need be under no alarm, as that government had expressed its disposition to adopt the most indulgent course with respect to them.

Ordered to lie on the table.

Bank Restriction.] Mr. *Horner* gave notice that on Wednesday next he would move for the appointment of a committee to inquire into the expediency on the part of the bank of England of renewing their cash payments, and into the means best calculated for effecting that object. The hon. and learned gentleman then moved, That there be laid before the House an account of the nett weekly amount of the bank of England notes in circulation, from the 9th of February, 1815, to the latest period to which the same could be made out, distinguishing post bills from notes, and distinguishing those under the value of 5*l*.

Mr. *Grenfell*, in consequence of the notice which his hon. and learned friend had given of a motion on the subject of the restriction on cash payments at the bank for Wednesday, suggested to the right hon. gentleman opposite, the expediency of deferring the third reading of the bank restriction bill, which stood for Monday, until the fate of his hon. and learned friend's motion should be decided.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* replied, that the measure was not one of novelty, that the grounds on which it was proposed were well known, and that it was desirable no further delay should take place with respect to it.

Mr. *Horner* complained of the way in which the bill had been hurried through the House, which was the less defensible, as the existing act would not expire until July. Although, in point of form, the bill in progress was to continue the existing bill, yet, under the novel circumstances of the times, it assumed all the character of a new measure. It was therefore extremely important that the House should thoroughly understand on what principle it was recommended for their adoption, and for that purpose the fullest consideration and inquiry appeared to him to be indispensable.

Mr. *F. Lewis* strongly recommended, that the further proceeding on the bill should be postponed until the House had determined whether or not further inquiry was necessary.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* persisted in objecting to any further delay in the progress of the bill. It had been proposed on grounds of public notoriety, and had already undergone ample discussion.

Mr. *J. P. Grant* contended, that all that was notorious was, not the ground on which the bill should pass, but the ground on which it should not pass. When the restriction was originally proposed, it was on the ground of the exchange being against this country, and it was declared, that, when it came to par—when the price of gold should fall—this measure would be no longer necessary. It was notorious that those events had taken place, and yet the right hon. gentleman pressed the measure, and persevered in saying, that no inquiry ought to take place, as the reasons for passing the bill were notorious! He repeated the statement of his hon. and learned friend as to the way in which the bill had been hurried on at times when there were not twenty members present; the resolution of the committee, out of which the bill emanated, being moved at one o'clock in the morning, and the second reading of the bill taking place at four o'clock on a subsequent day. Under all these circumstances, he trusted the right hon. gentleman would yet agree to postpone the third reading until his hon. and learned friend's motion should be disposed of.

Mr. *Brougham* observed, that the new measure was as different from the old as the peace property tax was from the war property tax—a difference which he had no doubt the right hon. gentleman thoroughly understood [A laugh]. At what hour was the House to be driven to the discussion of the bill on Monday? Probably at one o'clock in the morning, the committee on the agricultural distresses having precedence of it. It was rumoured, and if true it might account for the right hon. gentleman's impatience on the subject that a bargain had recently been struck between the right hon. gentleman and the bank of England, by which the latter agreed to accommodate the former with a further loan of ten or twelve millions out of the unknown and unlimited funds of the bank of England (funds likely to continue unknown and unlimited, if the existing system continued to be pursued), in addition to the nine millions which they had already agreed to advance, in consideration of which the right hon. gentleman had agreed to enable the bank to continue to enjoy during peace the privilege of coining money.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* begged leave positively to deny, that any advance which the bank had made, or which they might hereafter make to government, was connected with the bill in progress in the House; and which stood wholly on its own merits.

The motion was then agreed to. On Mr. Horner's moving for further accounts of a similar nature,

Mr. *Brougham* wished that the chancellor of the exchequer should answer the question positively, whether he would consent to postpone the further progress of the bill, until after the discussion of his hon. and learned friend's motion on Wednesday.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said a few words in reply, but in so low a tone as to be inaudible in the gallery.

Mr. *Tierney* observed, that a question of such importance as the bank restriction bill should not be suffered to slip through the House without sufficient inquiry as to its necessity, and if the third reading of that Bill were urged on Monday, he should feel it his duty to oppose it by every possible means. It was not for the purpose of causing any unnecessary delay that he wished for its further postponement, but in order that the House should have sufficient time to consider of its expediency. A committee would be the best means by which that expediency could be known, and it was in order to have such a committee formed, and to give them time to inquire, that he wished to have the further progress of the bill delayed for a short time. The right. hon. the chancellor of the exchequer had said, that the grounds of the restriction were matters of public notoriety. This was what he did not believe, and what he wished, if they did exist, should be made known to the committee. It had also been said, that the restriction was not connected with any advance made or to be made, by the bank. This also he did not believe. He knew the bank would not consent to any advance unless they received considerable advantages by it. The chancellor of the exchequer had made a sort of bargain with the bank. He had said, "Do you lend me the money I want, and I shall take care that none shall be demanded of you" [Hear, hear!]. The question was not now so much whether the bill should be read a third time, or what should be the duration of the restriction, but whether any restriction on cash payments was necessary, and an inquiry by a committee would be the best means of ascertaining that fact. A late hour on Monday or Tuesday evening would not be the proper time for moving the third reading of the bill, and if it were moved on either of those evenings, he should oppose it by moving an adjournment.

Lord *Castlereagh* observed, that when the bill came on for a third reading on Monday, his right hon. friend, the chancellor of the exchequer, would be prepared to show its necessity.

Sir *J. Newport* observed, that the restriction of cash payments must have been a source of immense profit to the bank, as could be proved by the circumstance, that since it commenced, bank stock had risen very considerably.

The motion was then agreed to.

Mr. *Horner* observed, that another reason why the third reading of the bill should be postponed was, that it had not yet been printed.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* then moved, that the bill be printed.—Ordered.

Poor Laws.] Mr. *Curwen* wished to know from the noble lord opposite, whether it was the intention of his majesty's government to bring forward any measure on the subject of the Poor Laws. Those laws, as they stood at present, were generally complained of throughout the country, on account of their severe pressure on all ranks. They were felt with peculiar severity in that part of the country which he represented, on account of the number of Irish and Scotch labourers who resorted thither. Two bills had already been brought into the House on the subject, but both had been rejected, because of their insufficiency. The state of the country was such at present, and the operations of those laws in general so severe, that some inquiry on the subject was absolutely necessary, and he knew of no means by which that inquiry could so well be made, or an adequate remedy provided, as by a committee. It was out of the power of any individual to propose such a remedy as would answer generally. A committee alone, after mature deliberation, could do this. He hoped the noble lord opposite would not withhold his serious attention from this important subject.

Lord *Castlereagh* replied, that he was not prepared to state that his majesty's government intended to bring forward any measure on the poor laws. At the same time, he hoped that this would not discourage the hon. member, who, he believed, was very well informed on the subject, from bringing forward any motion on it.

Mr. *Curwen* observed, that he should rather see such a measure originate with his majesty's ministers as he conceived it would be attended with better effect than if it came from any individual; but if no other member brought it under the notice of the House, he would submit a motion on it, in the course of a short time.

General *Hart*, in moving for the immediate production of some papers relative to the excise in Ireland, which had been ordered on the 23rd of February, took occasion to complain of the great distress to which the people in many parts of Ireland, particularly in the North, were reduced, by the heavy fines levied in consequence of illicit distillation.—These, he observed, were in many instances so severe, that several of the persons on whom they were levied were reduced to great distress and want; their cows, sheep, and horses being frequently taken off, and starved to death before they could be redeemed by the owners. He also complained of the manner in which excise officers often conducted themselves, in their search for illicit whisky; and the hardships to which many innocent persons were exposed, in whose care or possession such whisky was found. He made these complaints for the purpose of calling the attention of the House to the state of the excise laws in Ireland, as far as the same regarded illicit distillation.

Forged Notes.] General *Thornton*, pursuant to the notice he had given, rose to move for "a return of the total nominal value of all Notes presented at the bank of England and refused payment as being forged, in the last four years, and up to the latest period to which it could be made out, specifying the amount of each year." He observed, that the practice of forging notes had risen to a great height lately, and he understood particularly since the restoration of peace. Many of those notes were so well executed, that they were with difficulty distinguished from good ones. He also understood that several of those notes were brought from the continent; but he hoped this would not be found correct. His object in making the motion was, that some remedy might be devised by which such forgery might be rendered more difficult. This he conceived might be done by a different method of making them from that which was at present followed. Several plans for this purpose had already been presented to the bank of England, and among others, one by earl Stanhope, which had been rejected by the bank as too expensive. He conceived that the adoption of some plan was necessary to prevent the great evil which he had pointed out.

The motion was agreed to.

ASSESSED TAXES.] Mr. *Brougham* wished to know from the chancellor of the exchequer, whether any late orders had been issued to the collectors of the Assessed Taxes and the arrears of the property tax, by which those collectors were obliged to demand the immediate payment of those taxes when they fell due. He was induced to ask the question, from the circumstance that several reports had got into circulation, of notices having been sent by the collectors of those taxes, demanding immediate payment when they became due. He could mention one instance where a gentleman in Edinburgh, who owed assessed and other taxes to the amount of 122*l.* had received a peremptory order for payment, from the collector. He did not precisely know what indulgence in point of time was given for the payment of the assessed taxes after they became due, but he knew that with regard to the property tax, it was not payable till Midsummer, when it became due in April.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* replied, that no such order as that to which the hon. and learned member had alluded had been issued; on the contrary, great indulgence was to be allowed. With regard to the arrears of the property tax still due, it was his intention to submit, in a short time, some measure of indulgence as to the time of their payment.

Mr. *Brougham* expressed himself perfectly satisfied at the candid explanation which had been given.

DUNLEARY HARBOUR BILL.] On moving, that the bill for erecting an Asylum Harbour for ships to the eastward of Dunleary, within the port of Dublin, be read a second time,

Mr. *Vesey Fitzgerald* informed the House, that he had heard with surprise, and he confessed with great regret, that an opposition had arisen in Ireland to the provisions of the bill; no doubt the House would be surprised to hear that among those who opposed it, and also who were, he believed, active in obtaining petitions against it, were some who had been most forward in the steps which had led to the present measure—many of them subscribers to those petitions which he had had the honour of presenting to the House both in the last and the present session, and upon which the bill had been introduced. He felt that in proposing the loan of so large a sum as that which had been estimated as necessary to complete the work designed, he had gone as far as he could go consistently with his public duty. He felt that the government of the country had gone far in recommending to that House the advance of at least half a million of money at the request of those who had put forward the first application. He was sure the House had manifested a liberality without example, with respect to any works of the same description in England; nor should he be justified in calling upon the House of Commons to do more in the present state of the finances of the united kingdom, and at a time particularly when the whole revenue of Ireland was inadequate to its proportion of expenditure. If those gentlemen who oppose this bill, at the other side of the water, had been acquainted with the common forms of parliament, they would not have misled the public by propositions so vague, and so inadmissible, as those which they had advanced. If they had been acquainted with the history of any of those proceedings connected with the docks and harbours and other works in this country which were the subject of bills in parliament, they would not have ventured to tell the petitioners that the expense of a work of this nature ought to be defrayed out of the exchequer; if they had had any experience of the feeling of the House in this session, with regard to the public expenditure, they would not have encouraged hopes which they must know would be disappointed; if they had any fair or honest motives of opposition, they would not have, by the grossest misrepresentation, endeavoured to menace some and seduce others into a petition against an undertaking which had for its great object the salvation of human life; if they had felt for the character of the city of Dublin, they would not have attempted to recall the petitions which had been laid before the representatives of the people, nor would they have stigmatized the mercantile body of the Irish capital with such gross inconsistency.—If they had felt for the interests of humanity, they would not have exhibited the people of Dublin at the bar of the House of Commons petitioning against a bill which would have saved the sinking sailor in the night of tempest and of danger. Shameful misrepresentations, he had reason to believe, had been used.—Some of the opposers of the bill had dared to say, that a tax on houses was to be imposed to defray the expense.—Great misrepresentations must have been used to prevail on the citizens of Dublin to take such a course, so inconsistent with their former professions and conduct—so inconsistent with the character of their country.

Having said so much, it only remained for him to assure the House, that he would not, against the opposition of the city of Dublin, continue to press the bill. He should lament, indeed, for the sake of humanity, if the bill was lost—he should lament it for the sake of his native city. He had contemplated great advantages as likely to result from its accomplishment. He had hoped that in future, and at no distant times, the harbour of which the foundation might now be laid, would have contributed to the increase of the trade of Dublin, to the safety and convenience of shipping; and those who were acquainted with the locality of Dublin, with the impediments belonging to its bay, might have anticipated the advantages which would flow from a landing harbour at Dunleary, and from its being made a place of delivery for vessels of a tonnage which could not now ascend the river. Great docks had already been constructed to the southward of the city, which were not likely to be applied to the purposes for which they had been designed; and a ship canal from the intended harbour to these docks might be formed with a facility, which the public were hardly aware of, and at an expense, as he believed, which would be amply repaid by the resulting benefit to the trade of the capital; but he would not recapitulate the grounds upon which he should regret the defeat of this great measure.

The right hon. gentleman said, that after the second reading, he should move the committal of the bill, and the report; but would not press the further proceeding upon it, until the fair sense of those most materially concerned could be ascertained; it was necessary, however, unless he were to abandon it at once, to carry it through certain stages, in order to comply with the orders of the House; he should not, great and interesting as the object was, he again said, press it against the sense of the city of Dublin. It would be for those who felt anxious for its success, to explain to parliament their opinions; it would be for those merchants and ship owners, upon whose petitions the bill had been introduced, and who had not changed their minds, to show that their opinions and desires remain unshaken, and it would then be for that House to determine between the contending parties. He would not condescend to advert to what had passed, of petty intrigue and cabal on this subject. His object could not be mistaken; it was no wish to be the author of a popular measure, however gratifying that result might be to him. He should regret the failure of the bill, and the citizens of Dublin might regret it when it was too late. As to the government, it was not for them, he repeated, to force it. The noble person at the head of the government of Ireland would regret as much as any man any obstacle that might arise to the completion of this work, whether as a source of improvement to the capital where he resided, or as an asylum for the distressed and endangered mariner. The House would lament it too; but the House had been liberal, and the government would have done its duty.

The Bill was then read a second time.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, April 25.

Transit Duties on Foreign Linen.] Mr. *Finlay*, on rising to move for a committee to inquire into the propriety of repealing the exportation duties on Foreign Linen, entered into an elaborate view of the export linen trade in general. The duties on foreign linen, when imported for the purpose of exportation to the West Indies and Spanish America, were in the first instance 7½ per cent.; and when they were intended for home consumption, they amounted to 70, 80, and sometimes even to 90 per cent. This was of course almost equal to a total prohibition; but as it had no relation to the object of his motion, he should confine himself to the foreign trade. As far as related to a time of war, he acceded to the wisdom of the regulation, because it threw the whole trade into our hands. The great mart for linens was Spanish America, which could then only be supplied through us; but even then, we could never sell a cargo unless it were assorted, that is, unless it contained a certain portion of foreign as well as of Irish and Scotch linens. At present our depots in the West Indies were resorted to, for purchases for the Spanish American market, but the export duties prevented us from having an assortment of foreign linens, on terms as cheap as they could be sold by foreigners who carried them out from the continental ports. Now, unless our depots could be supplied with foreign linens as well as the home ones, we should be prevented from selling as much of the latter as we had been accustomed to do, as the Spaniards would not take any from us unless they could get a certain proportion of foreign. When no duties were laid on the importation of foreign linen, the consumption of what we exported of our own was much greater than it has been since, and no evil arose from the law, as it formerly stood. After a variety of observations on the necessity of competition of Irish and Scotch linens in foreign markets, which, he contended, would be effected by the repeal of the transit duty, the hon. gentleman added, that he would leave to Ireland the monopoly of her own market, and not interfere with her market in Great Britain; and concluded with moving, "That a committee be appointed to take into consideration the laws regulating the trade in foreign linen, and to report their observations thereon to the House."

Mr. *Vesey Fitzgerald* said, that on a subject so deeply affecting the interests of Ireland, he could not remain silent. He thanked the hon. gentleman for what it seemed he considered a great concession, "he would leave to Ireland the monopoly of her own market, and he would not interfere with her market in Great Britain." This, in the opinion of the hon. gentleman, was a great concession, and from this the House would interpret whether his real motive were, to benefit, as he proposed, the Irish trade, or to serve the interests of the carrying merchant. In a word, it was a question between our domestic manufacturers and those who were connected with the shipping interests. It was a question, whether for their benefit, the House would depart from the policy on which they had acted, and open the markets of South America to the exporter of foreign linen in preference, and to the exclusion, he would say, of that which was subjected to taxation, to high rents, and to an expensive process, all of which prevented the Irish manufacturer from entering into competition with the fabric of those countries where the same burthens are not imposed. The hon. gentleman said, that his object was to benefit the Irish manufacturer. He preferred to the opinion of the member for Glasgow, the unanimous resolution of those connected with the linen trade of Ireland; of all the manufacturers of her provinces, and of the board who presided over their interests. He thought it extraordinary, too, that one of the arguments in support of the proposition should be, that it would benefit Ireland, yet the same point was urged by Prussia, on the ground that we were excluding her manufactures from their natural markets by our transit duty; thus the hon. gentleman proposed, for the benefit of Ireland, the same measure, exactly the same, which the Prussian merchant and the Prussian ministry contended for, on the ground that it would benefit the manufacture of Prussia and Silesia. But the hon. gentleman was still more inconsistent, for he told us that foreigners could send out their linens direct from Dantzig, Bremen, and other ports; and yet his whole argument went to prove, that assorted cargoes for the American market could be had only in the ports of Great Britain. The hon. member knew that they could not obtain them in those British islands to which he had alluded; or did he say that they had sufficient depots in the Danish or other islands in the West Indies. He knew that they had not. The Spaniards, said the hon. member, were not satisfied without foreign linens: but he knew that for years they had none but British or Irish; for if they had any other, his complaint of the effect of the transit duty was absurd. He said that we could not send forth or sell our linen as foreign! Yet, would the House believe it, the hon. gentleman had been himself the author of a measure which dispensed with the seals and marks affixed to our linen for the avowed purpose of giving to it a character of foreign linen, and introducing it into the market of South America particularly, saying that we had the means of thus possessing ourselves of that great market. This had occurred not more than two years ago. The hon. gentleman was himself the author of that bill. At that time the manufacturers of Scotland were benefited by the one bill, and now the port of Glasgow, and the carrying merchants were to be benefited by the other. As a question of revenue he would not argue it, though in despite of the transit duty, so considerable was the export in 1814, that the duty retained in this country was near 40,000*l.* over and above very high import duties. A noble friend of his, the member for the county of Antrim, had that day presented a petition from the manufacturers of the north of Ireland against the duties on barilla, and other materials used in bleaching. He regretted that he had not been in the House when that petition was presented, for he certainly should have endeavoured to show that the noble lord (Yarmouth) and his constituents, had taken an erroneous, at least an unreasonable view of that question. That, however, was not the point at present. He would not obstinately persevere in retaining the duties on barilla, if it was shown that he was wrong; but if such was the feeling, such the alarm with respect to a duty so inconsiderable, what would be the impression if we took away the market which we now possessed? He could assure the House, that the alarm was great and universal; this proceeding would take from us directly our greatest consumption. The export of Irish linens to Great Britain had increased in the three last years beyond what gentlemen were perhaps aware of. In 1812 it was 35,000,000 of yards, in 1814 37,000,000, and in the last year more than 40,000,000. Since the enactment of the transit duty the increase of the import of Irish linens into this country has been progressive; this the papers on the table would show. A further proof was exhibited of the result of the transit duty in the export of Irish linens from Great Britain in the same years. In 1812, of Irish linen, the quantity exported was 5,800,000; in 1814, 7,226,000; in 1815, it amounted to 9,562,000; but the increase in the export of British linens was greater still; in the first of the years he had quoted, it was 13,000,000 of yards; in the second 18,000,000, while in the last, in despite of all the unfavourable circumstances which the hon. member had referred to, it was more than 17 millions; this would show that it was not a mere Irish question. England, too, had a little share in the consideration—or was her manufacture too to be given up for the carrying trade? But even if it were but an Irish question, it would be his duty, said the right hon. gentleman, and his determination to resist the motion. The House could hardly estimate what the feeling in Ireland was upon it. He had yesterday received a letter from the committee on the linen trade at Belfast, earnestly intreating the protection of the government, and praying that the united parliament would fulfil the pledges which the separate legislatures of Great Britain and Ireland had repeatedly given. The House of Commons would not, on the speculative opinions of any body of men, however respectable, take a proceeding so alarming to those who constituted a large portion of the Irish population. They would remember what had been promised to the staple manufacture of that country; they would remember, that you had taken the woollen trade from them, that you had forced them to abandon the manufacture which was flourishing, and that you received upwards of two millions annually from them, for that manufacture which they had abandoned. He could tell the House, on the authority of Mr Ferguson, the chairman of that committee that he had referred to, that there had been received orders, by some of the greatest bleachers, from houses in London, for linens made up in imitation of foreign linens, and intended for the very markets which the hon. gentleman had named. These orders were now all suspended, until the fate of the present motion was decided. There was not a year which would not make this trade of Ireland more important as our fabric became more known. On these grounds, he would oppose the hon. gentleman's motion. A committee of inquiry could do no good: he saw much harm which it might do; and at a moment when parliament was devising means to encourage national industry, and to sustain the drooping exertions of the country, he, for one, would consent to nothing which must tend to diminish both, and agitate unnecessarily the minds of one of the most important provinces of Ireland. The best interests of the empire were involved in this motion, and he would therefore meet it with a direct negative.

Mr. *Marryat* contended, that the right hon. gentleman who had just sat down, had taken an erroneous view of the question. It had been one of the great objects of Mr. Pitt's policy to make this country the emporium of commerce. With this view he had advised the formation of those wet docks and warehouses, which were so well calculated for the furtherance of that object. There were two great articles on which our foreign commerce depended—foreign linens and French wines. He trusted, not only that the hon. member for Glasgow would succeed in his present motion, but that a general investigation would take place, in order to revive those regulations which having been made for a time of war, were not applicable to a time of peace. During war we enjoyed the monopoly of commerce, and might do as we chose. But times were changed. Peace gave to the other powers of Europe the means of competition, and unless we could enter into the contest on equal terms, our commerce would soon be lost, and go into other channels. In fact, the continuation of war duties in a time of peace, had already almost cost us the two great articles of our foreign commerce—foreign linens and French wines. As an underwriter, he had taken pains to observe the number and nature of the ships employed in the transit of foreign commerce. For the first three months after peace, the number of British ships in comparison with the number of foreign ships so employed, was as four to one. In the next three months, they were as two to one. In the succeeding three months, the number of British and foreign ships so employed, were nearly at par. In the last three months he was sorry to say, that the number of foreign ships compared with British, was as two to one. That very morning, on a reference to the list at Lloyd's, received from their agent at the Havannah, he found that at that port, (to which during the war we had a monopoly of the trade), 186 vessels had arrived in the months of January and February, and that of those 186 vessels, not one came from a British port! This was an answer to what the right hon. gentleman had said of the alarm excited among the Irish linen manufacturers, by the present proposition. If no ship arrived at the Havannah from a British port, no Irish linens could arrive there. He had formerly freighted vessels to the Havannah; and he had never sent foreign linens thither, without their having been accompanied by Irish linens. A correspondent of his had come to this country last year, from the Havannah, with 20,000*l.* for the purchase of goods—a fourth of which was to be laid out in foreign linens, and French wines. Finding, however, that such heavy duties were imposed on the latter articles in Great Britain, and that he could consequently obtain them at a much cheaper rate in any port of the continent, he went to the continent for that purpose, and there finding, that—owing to the wise system adopted by our late enemies, and present rivals, of establishing free ports for the reception, and re-exportation of foreign manufactures without duty he could ship other articles as well as foreign linens and French wines, on more advantageous terms than in Great Britain, instead of reserving 16,000*l.* for the purchase of goods in Great Britain (most of which would have been Irish linens), he laid out his whole 20,000*l.* in a foreign country. Yet this was the system of commercial policy, which the right hon. gentleman recommended the House to maintain. All that parliament were called upon to do was to inquire. They were not desired to pass any law: but they were desired not wilfully to shut their eyes against all information on the subject. He was afraid his majesty's government were not sufficiently aware of the importance of the commerce which the present system tended to destroy. If the existing duty was taken off, although no immediate advantage would be derived by the exchequer, yet an indirect advantage of the greatest importance would ensue from the animation which would be imparted to our commerce, and which would circulate like the life blood through all the veins of this great empire. Considering the magnitude of the subject, and the duty imposed on parliament of giving it their most serious attention, he trusted that the motion of the hon. gentleman, for the appointment of a committee, would be acceded to.

Lord *Castlereagh*, while he admitted that, on the general principle, there was great temptation to the adoption of the hon. gentleman's proposition, yet contended that it ought to be considered with reference to particular circumstances. He was persuaded that, under those circumstances, the result of the proposed inquiry would be to reject the measure recommended by the hon. gentleman, and pending that inquiry much agitation and unpleasant feeling would be created in a part of the empire, which it was most desirable to soothe and conciliate. As to the statements made by the hon. gentleman who had just spoken, of the decline of our foreign commerce, he conceived them to be only the ordinary indications of a change from a state of war to one of peace. For his own part, he was glad to learn that some foreign ships were found where during war no foreign ship had been able to go, as it showed that the commerce of continental Europe was not altogether chilled and annihilated; and as he was convinced that this country would derive more benefit from the extent to which her commercial transactions would be carried in peace, than from the commercial monopoly which she had possessed in war. As to the general principle, he did not wish to see a heavy transit duty on those articles of foreign produce, in the carrying of which the trade of this country was so much benefited. The carrying trade of this country was a most advantageous branch of commerce, but in the present case it was not that kind of one which should be preferred to so important a branch of our home manufacture as the linen trade, or cultivated to its prejudice. He was not prepared to admit, that by an adherence to a general principle of commerce, we should silence or sacrifice an important commercial and manufacturing branch of such vast local advantage. Another objection which he had to the appointment of a committee was, that besides its creating a great degree of alarm, it would not afford any additional information to that which was already furnished by several documents which were before the House. For he contended, that there was no branch of this trade with which the House could not be fully informed by documents which had been already laid before them. The committee might, indeed, be able to furnish a good deal of reasoning on the subject, but they would not be able to produce any new facts. It was clear that the exports of Irish linen had considerably increased since the imposition of the transit duty, and the general fear in Ireland was, that the trade would be materially injured by the repeal of that duty. This it was which caused so much alarm on the part of the Irish manufacturers; and he contended that it was the duty of the House rather to allay any ferment on the part of the people of Ireland than contribute to increase it by the adoption of such a measure as that which was now proposed. He thought it was not consistent with sound commercial policy to play tricks with our domestic industry, and he was convinced that with regard to Ireland, the present was by no means the time for such experiments. He would not object generally to making this country the grand emporium of foreign produce, but he should make a great distinction between such articles as would be in competition with our home produce, and those which were not so.

Mr. *J. P. Grant* supported the motion. If it had not been for the statements of the noble lord and the right hon. gentleman, that doubts were entertained on the subject, he should have thought it unnecessary to enter into the inquiry. It had been said that the trade had increased. But when had it increased? It had increased during war. An hon. gentleman, however, had shown that this trade was now on the point of being annihilated. There were this year 186 ships at the Havannah, and not one British among them; and yet the noble lord said the House had all the facts before them to enable them to make up their minds that the inquiry was unnecessary. He should like to know what could be said on this subject by the board of trade and by the chancellor of the exchequer; and he hoped the House would be indulged with their opinion. If they did not say any thing upon it, he was sure they must differ in opinion from the noble lord. Why should we not return to our former policy in time of peace? He entreated those gentlemen to vote for this committee who had always considered the carrying trade of great importance though the noble lord called on the House to resist inquiry, because there were a few people, manufacturers, who, in his humble opinion, were counteracting their own interests, by contending for a measure which would be vitally injurious to the carrying trade. He trusted, no person would believe that the House ought to have its hands tied up from such an inquiry.

Mr. *Peel* was convinced that the hon. member who spoke last was actuated in what he said by the best of motives: but he was also certain that that hon. member had argued from an erroneous view of the question. It was erroneous to suppose that the people, whose fears were so justly excited by the notice of the present motion, were few in number. The fact was they were a most numerous, industrious, and respectable body of people. They were, he might say, almost the whole of the population of the province of Ulster. They carried on this important trade, which was the staple trade of Ireland, and which England was bound to protect, as it had been guaranteed to Ireland by the promise of king William 3d, in lieu of the woollen trade, of which they were then deprived. It was a trade, the protection of which was granted to them in lieu of that great trade in which they were at one time the powerful rivals of England. Would the hon. member say that those men were misguided who looked with fear on any act of the legislature which went to injure their staple trade? Or would he say that they were only a few, when he (Mr. Peel) informed him of their great numbers? The fears which were excited by the notice of the present motion had already a very powerful effect in giving a partial stagnation to the Irish linen trade, as had been proved by what had fallen from his right hon. friend (Mr. V. Fitzgerald). He would not say that all those fears which were entertained on this subject were well founded, but he would contend, that as such fears were known to exist, it would be impolitic at the present moment to increase them by any act which could ultimately produce no good. He thought that it would be considered as a bad omen by the people of Ireland, if a motion were acceded to, which, in their opinion of it, would be sacrificing their staple trade to the carrying trade of England. This, he was convinced, would be considered as a bad omen of the disposition of parliament towards them, on the eve of its going into the discussion of the motion of the right hon. baronet opposite (sir J. Newport), and therefore he contended it would be highly impolitic to accede to the motion. An hon. member had said, that the repeal of the transit duties would serve the linen-manufacturer of Ireland. This was but an opinion, and against that opinion he could urge two others. The one, that of the foreign manufacturers, and the other, that of a most intelligent body of men—the linen board of Ireland. The former were convinced that the repeal of the transit duty would not serve the Irish manufacturer, and the latter were equally certain of it. The right hon. gentleman concluded by stating, that the present question should not be considered solely in a commercial point of view, but also in a political one. Its consequence would involve great agitation, which it should be the duty of parliament rather to allay than stimulate.

Mr. *Robinson* regretted that he felt himself under the necessity of differing from the opinions of his right hon. and noble friends, respecting the duty in question. About three years ago, when the continent was gradually shaking off the manacles imposed upon it by what was called the continental system, it was reported to him, and he concurred in the opinion, that the repeal of this transit duty would be beneficial. If he had thought it would have been injurious to Ireland, he would not have been in favour of it. He knew that the subject had excited strong dissensions; but he had uniformly stated the impossibility of submitting it to the House, without the concurrence of the manufacturers both of England and Ireland. They, however, differed from him, and on repeated applications, one of which was made only last year, he distinctly gave them to understand, that unless the manufacturers of Ireland and Scotland could be conciliated, and brought to agree with his view of the subject, he must decline interfering in it. He still thought the repeal of the duty would not be prejudicial to Ireland; but there certainly were circumstances in the case which induced him to hope that the measure would not now be pressed upon the House.

Alderman *Atkins* was in favour of the motion. He said, that the advantage Ireland would receive from the abolition of the duty would assuredly be a considerable export trade beyond what she enjoyed at present. If this country laid a small duty only on transits, it would be for the general benefit of the manufacturers of Ireland. He thought an inquiry more likely to allay the alarm and irritation alluded to than to increase them.

Mr. *Forbes* advocated the advantages of appointing a committee, conceiving the reasons advanced by his hon. friend who made the motion as perfectly conclusive.

Mr. *M'Naughten* conceived the committee unnecessary. The object proposed by the hon. member appeared to him highly injudicious.

Sir *J. Newport* lamented that such a motion as the present should have been made at all, but particularly on the eve of the discussion of the question respecting Ireland, which he should have the honour of submitting. He contended, that the adoption of any measure which would tend to injure the linen manufacture of Ireland, would be a direct violation of a most solemn engagement on the part of England to protect that trade, which she had adopted on being driven out of her woollen trade. The effects of the present motion, if acceded to, would be most injurious to Ireland, as it would be believed there, that England was about to sacrifice the linen trade as she had already done the woollen. He did not mean to say that the House could entertain such an intention, even if it adopted the motion; but such would be the opinion in Ireland, and therefore he should oppose the motion; The present was not the time for the discussion of such a question, and therefore it would only add irritation and disquiet, where too much of both existed already.

Mr. *Finlay*, in reply, observed, that whatever argument had been advanced in the progress of this debate, had been directed rather against the supposed object of the inquiry than against inquiry itself. In his opinion no proof had been adduced that inquiry would prove prejudicial to the Irish manufacture: on the contrary, he believed it would be of advantage to it. He knew that considerable alarm had arisen from a misconception that the object of his motion was to throw the home market open to foreign linens of every description. The noble lord had said truly, that there was a great increase in the exports of linen from Germany; and this increase might be of material advantage to our commerce, if we reverted to our former policy; but at present it was of none. He feared much that if further delay took place, this transit trade would take another turn; and he was satisfied that the noble lord was not aware of the deep interest which foreigners, and particularly the Americans had in the continuance of the present system.

The House then divided:—For the motion, 33; Against it, 108; Majority, 75.

PROPERTY TAX.] General *Fergusson*, in presenting a petition from the landowners and occupiers of land in the county of Fife and its neighbourhood, said, he was happy on the present occasion by bringing before the House a petition most respectably signed by the inhabitants of that neighbourhood, to wipe out a sort of aspersion which had been cast on them on a former occasion, by the assertion that there had been but four voices in that county raised against the property tax. In the petition he held in his hand the abolition of that impost was gratefully acknowledged. This would prove that the general feeling in that quarter with respect to it, was not what might have been supposed from the statement to which he had referred. The petition, in setting forth the distresses of the agricultural interests, complained that the same time was not allowed by the commissioners in Scotland for the payment of the property tax now due, which had been granted to the same class of persons in England. In this country the farmer was not required to pay his property tax till July; in Scotland it had been already demanded. One uniform rule he was of opinion ought to be acted upon in both countries. The assessments made on property were also complained of, the tax being demanded on greater property than was really possessed, and on rents which ought to have been paid, but which had not been received, and were not likely to be made good.

Mr. *Barham* said, that numerous cases had come to his knowledge in which the tax had been levied on rents which had been remitted, though notice of the remission had been given: and also in cases where no rent had been received. He wished to know if any relief was to be afforded in such cases.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that this subject would be best taken into consideration when a measure which he intended soon to bring before the House should come under discussion. It would then be for them to determine whether any modification of the arrangement made under the minute of the treasury with respect to cases where rent had been remitted, would be expedient.

Sir *G. Warrender* begged to remark, that he had never said there were only four voices raised against the property tax in the county of Fife. What he had asserted, he would now repeat, namely, that at a meeting called to petition against the tax, there were only found four persons (those who had called the meeting) to vote against its renewal.

The petition was ordered to lie on the table.

MOTION FOR REDUCTION OF THE PUBLIC EXPENDITURE.] The order of the day being read,

Lord *George Cavendish* rose, and began by observing that he derived much satisfaction in performing the duty which he had undertaken, from the reflection that it would be unnecessary for him to fatigue the House by any statement of details in support of the motion of which he had given notice. The papers already laid on the table had furnished the most ample evidence of the state of the country both in its financial circumstances, its agriculture, and its manufactures. It was enough for him to refer the House to these documents, and to recommend to it that proceeding which, in his judgment, was the best calculated to enforce the adoption of a system of rigid economy in the expenditure of the public funds. He should perhaps be told, that the estimates had been revised, that considerable retrenchments had taken place, and that a sufficient disposition had been manifested to reduce the expenditure to as low a point as was consistent with national security. At the reductions which had been effected he rejoiced; and if this was an admission that the original estimates had exceeded what necessity required, he knew that their reduction was to be attributed to the exertions made in opposition to them, and to the emphatic tone in which the public opinion had been pronounced against them [Hear, hear!]. This was a circumstance which afforded encouragement to persevere in those efforts which had for their object a diminution of the public burthens. It was not his intention to enter on any discussion with respect to the armies we were maintaining abroad, or the various topics of colonial policy on which so much debate had already taken place; but he must still take the liberty of saying, that in his opinion there was no period of our history when the establishments of the country could be reduced with perfect safety to a lower scale than at the present moment [Hear, hear!]. When he compared our expenditure with that of any former time—when he considered the amount of the national debt, and on the other hand contemplated the admitted difficulties of the country, he was convinced that standing armies ought to be as much as ever an object of constitutional jealousy, and that the interests of the country could only be secured by persevering in the policy of general retrenchment. The noble lord concluded by moving: "That an Address be presented to his royal highness the Prince Regent, setting forth, that the House, in pursuance of the estimates which his royal highness had caused to be laid before them, had voted a military force greatly exceeding, in amount, what had been required on any former occasion, after the restoration of peace; but while they thus placed at his disposal that force which he considered to be necessary under existing circumstances, they humbly added their earnest prayer, that he would take the earliest opportunity of discontinuing the great military establishment thus sustained, which little agreed with the former policy of the country, and pressed heavy on its resources. That while they relied on the wisdom of his royal highness, they could not but consider a large standing army, in time of peace, as a subject of constitutional jealousy; for this reason, as well as on account of the heavy burthens thrown on the people by a long protracted war (which they hoped would be taken into consideration by his royal highness), and also from a conviction that economy was necessary to the support of public credit; they prayed that he would be graciously pleased to reduce and limit to the utmost the peace establishment now to be formed, and to enforce the most rigid and undeviating economy in every department of the state."

Mr. *J. P. Grant* said, he was as much a friend to small economy as other people, but it was not a reduction of part of the staff of our army, it was not a reduction of 100,000*l.* from the ordnance estimates, it was not the discharge of a few clerks which could at this time save the country. Its situation could not now be looked at without feeling the greatest alarm. The whole amount of the sums to be provided for the year was 31,683,000*l.* Of this the establishments of the country formed upwards of 28 millions. But this was not all. Two-seventeenths of the joint expenditure of the United Kingdoms were, by the treaty of union, to be charged to the account of the treasury of Ireland; but such was now the situation of that country that its finances were not equal even to the payment of the interest of its debt; and we should have this year, besides the 2-17ths already mentioned, to make up a deficiency in the interest of the Irish debt, and the expense of the Irish civil list, amounting in all to 997,380*l.* Adding this sum to the 31,683,000*l.* the whole would amount to upwards of 32 millions and a half. To meet this sum, the whole ways and means, including the surplus in the hands of the chancellor of the exchequer, as stated by the right hon. gentleman himself, amounted to 12,700,000*l.* Deducting this from the 32,680,000, the amount of our expenditure in this first year of peace, the deficiency would be found to amount to no less than 19,981,000*l.* It would be consolatory to think that this deficiency arose in any great degree from the charges of winding up the war, charges not likely to occur again. But there was unfortunately no such consolation. How much did the House believe, on the present scale of our establishment, could be deducted from this deficiency of 19½ millions in future years? One million would have in future years to be added to our expenditure for the sum to be borrowed either from the bank, or by exchequer bills in the present year. He would ask the House to consider whereabouts we stood, when in the first year of the peace we should be obliged to borrow 19½ millions. Had ministers in contemplation to reduce this dreadful expenditure in any important degree? If they reduced the deficiency of the succeeding year to 15,000,000*l.*, it would be more than we had now reason to expect—Would they do this? and even if they did, we had the prospect before us of adding fifteen millions a year to our national debt.

It had been said, that Mr. Pitt had repented of the low rate at which he had fixed the peace establishment of the country previously to the last war; but persons who were well acquainted with the opinions of Mr. Pitt, had denied that he had ever expressed any regret at that circumstance. He (Mr. Grant) had never felt any great admiration of Mr. Pitt, as prime minister of this country; his abilities, however, were entitled to a high degree of respect, and it was but justice to him to say, that he had used his utmost efforts to reduce the expenditure in time of peace to a level with the income. He had imposed taxes to this end [Hear, hear! from the chancellor of the exchequer]—Yes, but he had also reduced the establishments to the lowest possible amount. In 1791 he instituted a committee of this House to inquire into the state of the public expenditure, so determined was he not to rest till he had openly and clearly shown the House and the country the grounds on which the expenditure then stood. From the estimates which had been laid before them, it could not be supposed that his majesty's ministers had taken any such extended view of the finances of the country. They must have begun at the wrong end; they had inquired for what sum certain services could be performed, instead of saying that there was a certain sum of which the best must be made. On any other supposition, it could not be imagined that they would have proposed a vote of 150,000 men for services for which only 50,000 had ever before been demanded. With regard to the necessity of this force, neither he nor the House could judge from any thing but from their knowledge of the history of times past. He could not say that a given number was sufficient in this or that island or garrison, but from the knowledge that on former occasions the same number had maintained the interests of the country. But the estimates which had been proposed and voted were greater than those which had been voted for the same services in former years of peace, and had only been defended on the supposition that they were the intermediate establishments between peace and war. But if the extent of the establishments was defended on this ground, it should be shown that the possessions in which the great establishments were kept up, were exposed to some dangers which in following years would cease. What dangers were the Ionian islands or the West Indian islands exposed to now, to which they would be less liable in the next year? Or if there were none, why support a temporary establishment? He could account for this reduction which was promised on no other supposition than this, that the ministers had formed estimates which they were themselves convinced were extravagant, and to avoid the shame of an immediate revision, they had raised the fiction of an intermediate state between peace and war, for which there was no ground either in the nature of public affairs, or the practice of the country. In Canada it was said the frontier had been cultivated, and the security which had been derived from morasses and forests had been taken away. But was it expected that these forests would rise again, or the morasses be formed again, so as to warrant a reduction hereafter which was not now practicable?

In 1791 the committee had approved the estimates which had been presented by the ministers without any reduction. On comparing those estimates with the votes of the present year, the difference was striking. It had been attempted to explain this difference by saying, that the pay of the army had been increased, and that Ireland had not been included in the estimates of that year. Yet even by trebling the whole estimate of that year, and making allowance for Ireland and for that expense which had been indecently called a dead weight on the country, he meant the pensions to those who had served their country and had bled for it, the sum of six millions only would be the result, instead of the 11,316,000*l.* which was now demanded. The estimate of 1791 was 1,518,842*l.* The half-pay, Chelsea hospital, and Hesse Cassel subsidy, amounted to 448,631*l.*, which being deducted, left 1,070,211*l.* The extraordinaries were 280,000*l.* which made 1,350,211*l.*

Three times this sum was	£.4,050,633
Add to this, for extra service in Ireland	500,000
For pensions and half-pay actually paid this year	1,953,894
	£.6,504,527
The actual expense of 1816	11,316,867
Excess	£.4,812,340

It required that a strong case should be made out to account for this increase. It had always been the practice of the country not only to husband its resources in time of peace, but to reduce at once the military force to the lowest peace establishment which it was thought fit to maintain. As an example of this, he should cite the force which had been voted after the peace of Paris. It had never been thought necessary in time of peace to maintain a force sufficient to repel a formidable invasion, but merely sudden attacks or domestic insurrection. Neither insurrection nor invasion had we now to fear; and though he did not think the peace which had been concluded, or the arrangements made, likely to secure the permanent peace of Europe, yet neither did he think that in the present or the next year, or for some few years to come, we had much danger to apprehend; it was therefore imperatively necessary to husband our resources at the present time, that we might be prepared for the future.

In looking at the constitutional view of the question he should remark, that in the comparisons which had been made between the present and former peace establishments the numbers of rank and file only of the present establishment had been taken into account, while the whole number of troops voted on former occasions had been set against them. This made the difference appear less striking than it really was, for the whole number of troops to be kept in Great Britain, would be found to be at least 32,000, including officers, of which there were 28,000 rank and file. In 1792, the whole force in Great Britain was 15,919; it was now 32,000 men. In the Old Colonies, the force was in 1792, 16,848: it was now 27,000. In Ireland it was then 16,000; now it was 28,000. This made, in the former period, a total of 48,767, and at present 87,000. Added to this, near 25,000 for the New Colonies, made a total of 111,756 men, which was the number actually voted this year, exclusive of the armies in France and India. For what purpose this force was to be kept up it was hard to say. It had been said that it could not be for purposes inimical to the constitution. He was not sent there to compliment any body of men, but to perform his duty to the people [Hear!]; and consistently with that duty, he could not entrust any prince or any ministers with so large a military force. He could not conscientiously say that a force of 32,000 men could be permanently kept on foot in this island without danger to the constitution.—In the course of his speech, Mr. Grant read to the House the following statements:

SUPPLY FOR THE YEAR 1816.

Navy				£.10,114,345	11	7
Army	9,316,867	9	8			
Army Extraordinaries	2,000,000	0	0			
				11,316,867	9	8
Ordnance				2,010,710	6	11
Miscellaneous services, estimated at				2,500,000	0	0
Interest, &c. on exchequer bills				2,260,000	0	0
				28,201,923	8	2
5 per cent. annuities	174,681	2	6			
Debentures	807,085	0	0			
				981,766	2	6
Debt to the East India Company				1,000,000	0	0
Debt to the bank				1,500,000	0	0
				31,683,689	10	8
Payment on account of national debt in Ireland, in the year ending 5th January, 1816	6,249,326	10	9			
Sum paid into the exchequer of Ireland, same year	5,752,861	5	11			
Deficiency for Ireland	496,465	4	10			
Civil list of Ireland	500,915	7	2			
				997,380	12	0
Note—The actual charge on the debt of Ireland, on 5th January 1816, is	6,665,010	0	0			
Receipts as above	5,752,861	5	11			
	912,148	14	1			
Against which is to be set the additional produce of the taxes (imposed in 1815.						
Total to be provided for the service of the empire for 1816				£.32,681,070	2	8

WAYS AND MEANS FOR 1816.

Surplus of consolidated fund, taken at	£.2,500,000	0	0
War customs and excise, exclusive of the war duty on malt	4,000,000	0	0
Annual taxes	3,000,000	0	0
Lottery	200,000	0	0
Total of ordinary ways and means	9,700,000	0	0
Surplus from the grant of 1815	3,000,000	0	0
Total ways and means	12,700,000	0	0
Which sum being deducted from the amount of supply, as above	32,681,070	2	8
Deficiency	£.19,981,070	2	8

ACCOUNT of the EXPENDITURE properly arising from the SERVICE of the year 1816, compared with the Ways and Means of the same :—

Total of the expenditure as above				£.32,681,070	2	8
Deduct as follows, being for service performed in former years:—						
Ordnance land service for 1814	£.67,205	9	10			
Ditto for 1815	16,851	13	4			
Ditto for Ireland, 1815	19,384	12	3			
5 per cent. annuities	174,681	2	6			
Debentures	807,085	0	0			
Debt to East India company	1,000,000	0	0			
Ditto to the Bank	1,500,000	0	0			
				3,585,207	17	11
Expenditure properly applicable to the service of 1816				29,095,862	4	9
Total ways and means as above				12,700,000	0	0
From which is to be deducted the surplus of grants of 1815				3,000,000	0	0
Ways and means arising from the public income of 1816				9,700,000	0	0
Excess of the expenditure properly arising out of the service of 1816, above the disposable income of the same year				19,395,862	4	9

The hon. and learned gentleman concluded by repeating, that the House would not do its duty if they were satisfied with general professions of economy; for, even if the policy of low establishments had not been that which had been uniformly pursued in former times, this would be the moment to adopt it.

Lord *Palmerston* begged to assure the hon. gentleman who spoke last, that in rising to oppose the motion, he did not intend to do so on the ground that he had assumed might be taken; or that of the motion being of too unusual a nature to be entertained. He did not quarrel with it because it had no precedent; for he would admit that the circumstances of the country were now so different from what they were formerly, that that course might be justifiable in the present state of things, which could not have been with propriety resorted to before. The objection he had to the motion was this, that it went to induce the House virtually to rescind the vote which they had come to on mature consideration, and after the most ample discussion, when the estimates were before them. He thought the motion improper, as it went to produce this immediate effect; and as to any prospective advantages to be derived from it, he must say, so far as the address had any relation to future estimates, it appeared to be wholly unnecessary. He was confident the House would concur with him in taking this view of the motion before them, so far as it regarded the arrangements of a future year. When another year should arrive, and ministers had made up their minds what establishments to propose for the service of it, and had prepared those estimates which it would be their duty to make, that would be the proper time for parliament to give an opinion on the subject. He viewed the motion of the noble lord in no other light than as one brought forward against the supplies which had already been voted for the service of the year; he could only see in it an indirect attempt to extort from the House a decision against what they had already pronounced upon. While speaking of the changes made in the military establishments, the hon. gentleman had said, the economy recommended in the speech of the Prince Regent at the beginning of the session, had not manifested itself in any of the arrangements of government, till after the strong expression of public opinion in that House had extorted from them measures of retrenchment. The hon. gentleman would thence have it understood, that the reductions which had taken place were the consequences of the proceedings to which he had alluded. The noble lord said, he was at issue with the hon. gentleman on this question. He denied the inference attempted to be drawn from what had occurred in the course of the present session, with respect to the revision of these estimates, and he would appeal to the House, if in the earliest moments when he had an opportunity of speaking on them, he had not stated them to have been made out as they were first presented, to facilitate the mechanical part of the business of the year, from its being desirable that they should have some data to go upon, before it was possible for a correct calculation to be formed as to the reductions which it might be practicable to make. To the recollection of the House he appealed if he had not said, when they were first produced, that the supplies, subsequently to be called for, would be much below those which appeared on the papers; if he had not said, that the estimates were such as were thought necessary at the close of the last year, but that in number and amount of the forces that would ultimately be proposed they would be considerably less. This he had stated to the House early in the session, and he therefore denied that the reductions which had been made in the staff of the army and in the local militia, and which had been recently submitted to parliament, were forced on ministers, or that their late conduct had been at all inconsistent with the language they had held at an earlier period than that to which their opponents so triumphantly referred. What had been done was perfectly in conformity with the explanations he had offered when he was first permitted to speak on the estimates in question. The sum at present voted for the army, the hon. gentleman had said, amounted to about 9,300,000*l.* He was not correct in this, as the whole of the supplies on account of the army, which had yet been obtained, were under 8,000,000*l.* This error, however, made no difference in the general argument of the hon. member. But he had endeavoured to make it appear, that the whole charge for the present year must be borne in the next. The noble lord said, he had over and over again shown that it was not likely a similar expense would fall on the country in future years, as many of the items were charges for winding up the war, which could not recur again. If, as the hon. gentleman had said, the revenue fell short in the present year of the sum necessary to meet the supplies demanded, to a very considerable amount, he (lord Palmerston) thought it rather hard that this should be urged as a serious charge against the government by those who had deprived them of so large a portion of the taxes by which it was proposed to cover them. If it was necessary to have recourse to a loan for the service of the present year, it was not quite fair that this should be censured by those who had so incessantly laboured to make it necessary, or that ministers, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, should be attacked because their ways and means fell short of the supplies which had been granted. The necessity under which the nation laboured of borrowing in the present year, was not the fault of the government, as it grew out of the course which parliament, on due consideration, had thought it wise to adopt in opposition to them.—As he had already so often gone into the details of the estimates, he would not now explain the considerations which had caused those arrangements to be determined upon, which had been made for the defence of our new colonies, the West Indies and America; but he thought it necessary to remark, that the hon. gentleman had over stated the force which it was thought proper to keep up in this country. He had stated it to amount altogether to 32,000 men. In this the hon. gentleman was mistaken. He would appeal to the House if it had ever been proposed to keep up more than 25,000 men. These were not merely the number of the effectives, but that of the establishment, exclusive of three thousand men as reliefs, making altogether but 28,000. The numbers set down for the service abroad were also not those of the effectives, but of the establishments.—One great point in the consideration of this question was, the objection made to a standing army in time of peace. It was, however, to be remembered, that a standing army had always been kept up, and therefore the constitutional question could now only arise out of the additional 8,000 men which it had been proposed to maintain. The hon. gentleman had shown that England had not been accustomed, in peace, to keep up a military force of sufficient strength to defend her in war. It had never been intended to do so during the present peace. His majesty's ministers had entertained no such design, but they had thought it of some importance to secure the means of keeping up a sufficient force in our colonial possessions, to repel a sudden attack, to which they were the more exposed, from the distance at which they lay from the mother country. It had been said, that that which had made England a great and an energetic nation, was the principle heretofore acted upon of maintaining a very low peace establishment, while the peace establishments of the continent were uniformly high. He did not agree with the hon. gentleman in the view which he had taken of this subject. For his part, he believed much of our financial embarrassment to have been caused by our former low peace establishments, and to this circumstance the failure of many of our military operations might with certainty be traced. The evils arising from the peace establishment being too low had been but too severely felt, at the commencement of the last war. It would have been well for this country had a principle been acted upon in the peace which preceded it, different from that which was then adopted, and which was now recommended by the gentlemen opposite. But it was taking a very superficial view of the subject, to suppose that the comparison that might be made between England and some of the nations of the continent in our favour, was to be accounted for, from the circumstance of a few thousands of soldiers being kept up on the peace establishment of one nation more than on that of another. The hon. gentleman might have looked deeper into it, and he would then have found the difference better explained by the principles of the British constitution. It was to that liberty which we enjoyed that the industry and exertion which happily distinguished England from many of the continental powers was to be ascribed, and to these advantages, which a free people only could possess, we owed all our superiority, which would not be affected by the largeness or smallness of our peace establishment.—Entertaining this opinion, he now pressed it on the House, that unless they were prepared to rescind the resolutions they had agreed to, and the opinions they had pronounced before the recess, on the estimates submitted to them, after consideration as long and mature, and after discussion as full and as ample, as had ever taken place on any question,—unless the House would do this, and undo now all they had done then, by calling on the sovereign to disband that force which their vote had authorized him to retain—unless the House, taking quite a different view of the state of the nation from what they took of it before, wished to act the part he had described, he called upon them not to concur in the present motion, because the effect of it was but to call upon the Crown to undo what parliament had done. The motion, so far as it regarded the establishments of next year, was wholly unnecessary. In due time the proper estimates and documents would be laid before the House, and they would be as competent to examine and criticise all the items in them, when 1817 should arrive, as they had been in the present year: while from the information of which parliament would by that time be possessed, they could discern all the various bearings of the question, certainly as well, if not better, than they could now, and then they could fairly decide whether the supplies called for were or were not required, with due attention to those principles of economy, for which the hon. gentlemen opposite so strenuously contended. To assure those hon. gentlemen that the individuals whose duty it would be to bring the subject forward, were as anxious to frame them with every possible regard to economy as any of their opponents could be, would perhaps call forth expressions that would imply a suspicion that much faith ought not to be given to such a declaration; but he could sincerely assure them, that there would exist, as there had existed, every disposition to frame them on the most rigid principles of economy, consistently with the discharge of the important duty imposed upon them, of defending this country, and its numerous dependencies, from every danger which could reasonably be anticipated. He would appeal to the hon. gentleman himself, if, at least, since that period at which he asserted retrenchment to have been forced on the government, great exertions had not been made on their part to lower the public expenditure, by making every practicable reduction. Unless the hon. gentleman thought the vigilance of parliament would not survive till another session,—unless he believed the same disposition and ability to watch and control the government, if they proposed an establishment on too large a scale, would no longer remain,—unless he thought the House would not then, as now, be alive to its duty, he must feel that at present there was no necessity for this motion. At a time like the present he felt that the greatest possible attention ought to be paid to economy; and he had, therefore, no wish, by opposing a direct negative to the address, to make it be thought that this feeling was other than general within those walls, and would therefore move,—"That the House do proceed to the other orders of the day."

Mr. *Macdonald* said:—Mr. Speaker; My noble friend, the secretary at war, has argued that this motion is ill-timed and superfluous. I shall presume to contend that it is neither the one nor the other. My noble friend will allow me, Sir, to observe to him, that that proposition can never be ill-timed which is founded in the public exigencies, and has the public good for its object: that that motion can never be deemed superfluous in a British House of Commons, which goes to identify the desires of the legislature with the prayers of the people. Sir, the consequences that must follow from the adoption of the address proposed to us, are indeed of a moment and magnitude unparalleled. The vote of to-night goes in effect to decide the peace system of this country, and in that what is not comprehended? its prosperity, its very existence! It will decide whether we shall recur to those notions and adhere to those principles that have made us what we are, or resort to others that may make us any thing else—whether we are prepared to sacrifice to military pride and civil profusion in peace those means that constitute the sinew of our strength in war—whether, in short, we indeed prefer the patronage—the overgrown dangerous and preposterous patronage—of the government to the constitution itself, which it gradually corrupts. These, Sir, and no less than these, are some of the points involved in our decision of to-night, and it will require even more ingenuity than the secretary at war possesses to divert the attention of the House from their paramount importance.

To the frame and tenor of the address my noble friend opposite has not even attempted to urge an objection—how should he? it is temperate, it is dignified, it is loyal;—but it has yet another characteristic, which I trust in this House at least will long be deemed a merit—it is purely British—British in its principle, because it is just—British in its policy, because it is straightforward—British in its language, because it is the language of truth. Sir, the people from all quarters have addressed themselves to us;—they have complained of excessive establishments, they have complained of a wanton and scandalous expenditure, they have complained of grievous, of intolerable distress. Is it fitting that the throne only should be left in ignorance, either of their sufferings, which we know to be real, or of their demands, which we hold to be reasonable? And how would it appear that his royal highness the Prince Regent is informed of the actual condition of the country which it is his lot to govern?—not from his language to his parliament—for there is no man who can believe that, if so informed, his royal highness could have mistaken stagnating manufacture and suspended agriculture for symptoms of universal prosperity, or the sad, the shameful necessity of governing a large portion of his dominions by the sword, for proof positive of his people's welfare! His advisers, indeed, to do them justice, have evinced the sincerity of their belief in the truth of what they had so counselled the regent to assert in their pleasant projects of peace government; but in these they but proved themselves to know nothing either of the feelings of the country, or the sense of parliament; and it is not too much to presume, that they who stand themselves convicted of gross ignorance, cannot by possibility have enlightened the mind of another. If, therefore, any other ground were wanting for the adoption of this address than the actual and evident state of affairs, it would be to be found in that state of profound ignorance in which the Prince Regent has been so long and so injuriously kept.

Sir, the address is mainly directed to two principal points, military establishments and finance; and first, as to the military establishments. My noble friend opposite, Sir, has argued that the address implies a censure on the recent resolution of the House, which fixed the amount of military force for the present year. It may be very dexterous, no doubt, thus to endeavour to deter gentlemen from their duty by suggesting this false alarm for their consistency, but it can succeed with no one who has read the address, or heard it read. Sir, it does not seek now to undo that which has been already done—still less does it seek to attain great prospective benefits through the medium of little retrospective reproaches. It states to his royal highness that, in compliance with the desire of his government, we have proceeded to sanction for the present year an extent of military establishments unprecedented in peace; and it expresses a regret which cannot but be common to all sides of this House, and to all classes of Englishmen—a regret that in the contemplation of that government, any case of necessity should have existed to warrant so signal a departure from the first principle of our constitution, and the universal practice of our ancestors. It prays that the most prompt and efficacious means may be used to reduce them for the ensuing year; and it deprecates this measure (standing as it must on its own exclusive grounds) being converted into a precedent for the future. Undoubtedly, if there be a man who is enamoured of large military establishments for their own sake, who would lament to see them reduced in another year, who ardently desires that they may be henceforth considered not as the exception, but the rule; he, and he alone, must oppose this address. For one, I protest, that if I had been as much convinced of the expediency of what we have done as I am of its inexpediency; if I were as well satisfied that the House would now confirm that vote if under their consideration as I am that they would reverse it—if it had been adopted by one of the largest instead of one the smallest majorities with which so vital a question was ever carried by a minister, I should have equally felt myself called upon to concur in this protecting vote. Sir, with respect to the diminution of those establishments, my noble friend, the secretary at war, seems extremely desirous to impress upon the House, that whatever little might have been done, or may yet be expected to be done, is not the effect of any thing that has passed here, but my noble friend must submit to be judged by facts and circumstances. True it is that some reductions upon the original estimates have been made; but how, why, and when have they been made? under what circumstances, in what spirit have they been made? are they the result of a wise and enlightened view of the situation of the country deliberately taken by the ministers of the Crown, digested into a solid plan, and gravely submitted to parliament? Sir, they are none of all this—convenience not conviction gave them birth—they are the result of a cool calculation of the *minimum* of retrenchment by which the minister might for the moment avert from his head the impending storm of public indignation! Let the House look well to this—assurances the most positive had been given that these estimates had been calculated on the lowest possible scale consistent with the public security—the noble lord had not been sparing of his challenges to us to go through them, item by item, and point by point; it was not till, disturbed somewhat rudely by the clamour of "ignorant impatience," he had awoke from his golden dream of universal prosperity to contemplate his own peril—it was not till he had been defeated in his most favourite measure—it was not till he had had an "hair-breadth escape" from a direct censure on the prodigality of his administration being recorded on our journals—it was not till a language not to be misunderstood had been heard within these walls—till warnings and even denunciations had passed those lips from whence praise and panegyric only had been accustomed to flow—it was not, in short, till the noble lord had discovered that the House of Commons was no longer his but the country's, that alarmed but not reformed, confounded but not converted, he gave to the wind his assurances, his challenges, his protestations—then the tocsin was sounded from Downing-street to the Horse Guards—committees of ministerial safety were appointed! the commander-in-chief was summoned to these midnight meetings. On a sudden impossibilities became practicable! Absurd and wild suggestions became proper and prudent precautions! then (oh! auspicious discovery!) it was indeed found that 120,000*l.* might be saved on the ordnance—that 90,000*l.* might be saved on the staff—that a few thousand pounds might be saved on the cavalry—and all this, be it observed, with one scratch of the pen upon estimates calculated on the lowest possible scale consistent with the public security!—but the 150,000 men!—Alas! it was too late—the statements of authority (so stoutly advanced to be so precipitately abandoned) had had but too much success—the 150,000 men were already beyond our reach. These reductions were therefore confined to such heads of the estimates as by chance were not yet concluded against us—but no; it was not to chance that we owe the opportunity of obtaining even this miserable pittance of justice to the people—we owe it solely to the vigilance and firmness of my right hon. friend below me (Mr. Tierney). I call upon the House to recollect the indecent haste with which it was attempted in a single night to hurry us on vote by vote through all the items of these estimates; but the attempt was defeated by the expressed determination of my right hon. friend to persevere through the night in moving the question of adjournment; and what followed? they who would not concede an hour to the decorum of our proceedings, and on behalf of the people's interest, did not blush, when their own paltry interests were ascertained to be in jeopardy, to come down to the House to ask days, nay weeks of delay. Sir, I beseech the House of Commons to bear in mind (they may profit by the lesson of experience) that but for my right hon. friend they would thus have sanctioned an expenditure of the public money, which they who proposed it, have since discovered would have been unnecessary, and which, if unnecesary, I take leave to say, would, in the present state of things, have been highly criminal. Such is the history of these reductions; yet it is to these we are referred for an argument to forbear from any expression of our opinions—as if because we had extorted something like an acknowledgment of the principle by exertion, we were to expect a due application of it from our silence! With regard to the trifling further reductions so pompously announced, I will only observe that they have all the same suspicious origin; that they all bear the common stamp of insincerity: whether a further saving of 50,000*l.* on the ordnance, of 40,000*l.* on the staff, of some few more thousands on the cavalry, will answer the ends of his majesty's ministers I know not, but sure I am that they are wholly inadequate to meet the just hopes and expectations of the country.

But, Sir, upon all these subjects, a sort of general defence has been set up by the noble lord in the blue ribbon, which I am the less willing to pass over, as the lamentations of the secretary at war upon the miseries of small peace establishments bear not a little upon it. The noble viscount has said—"You are not at war, but you are not yet at peace; you are in an intermediate stage between war and peace." If such a position be once admitted by the House, I say that real and substantial peace is no more for England; it is precisely this intermediate state which will fill up every interval betwixt every war, which will furnish means of mischief to every successive minister, and will ultimately debilitate the country, by perpetuating its burthens. And what is its estimated duration?—two or three years, said the chancellor of the exchequer at the commencement of the session—two or three years, Sir, we know to be but an indefinite term at best, and it is not altogether impossible that the same chancellor of the exchequer who is in the habit of omitting millions in his calculations of money, may prove not quite accurate in his calculations of time. I shall take leave to fix its duration not to any given number of years, but to the precise hour of the next declaration of war. Away then with this impudent pretext! England fought for peace; sensible, substantial, unequivocal peace; and she was told she had obtained it. It was not till an argument was wanting for large standing armies and continued taxation that the discovery was made, or at least avowed, that the famous thousand and one treaties had, after all, procured to us nothing more than the reversion of a peace, after an indefinite term, provided we should so long live! I pretend not, Sir, to predict how soon the torch of war may again cast its hideous glare upon the continent. With the opinions I happen to entertain, in common with my hon. friend who seconded this address, of the proceedings of the congress at Vienna, and more especially of the part acted there by Great Britain, I cannot be very sanguine; but, while we are yet in alliance with the whole world, let us not be told by the negociator of the peace, and the eulogist of his own negociations, that we must be content for the present to be released from little else of war than its triumphs. Sir, that in whatever quarter war may be first rekindled, and for whatever cause, England will there present herself with the sword in one hand and subsidies in the other, we have no good reason to doubt; but some repose at least the harassed world must have; and if there be a power who refuses to partake in it, least it should prove short, and who prefers to parade the while under the pressure of his armour that weighs him down, that power, when the struggle shall be renewed, will, from his own folly, be the first to fall, and let it at least not be England!

Upon the financial part of this subject I can hardly persuade myself to say a word, after the luminous and incontrovertible speech of my hon. friend, the member for Grimsby. The observations I will obtrude upon the patience of the House shall be but two or three. In the course of one of the discussions subsequent to the rejection of the income tax, a memorable admission fell from the chancellor of the exchequer. In that sort of easy, innocent, inconsequent tone in which a man would hardly speak of the state of the weather, the chancellor of the exchequer said that the financial condition of the country was truly critical. Now, Sir, though it required no conjuror to tell us this, and most of us were pretty well apprized of it already, yet falling from the finance minister and under the circumstances it did, I own it made a strong impression on my mind; and how my right hon. friend (for whose virtues I have a sincere respect), with this truth engraven on his mind, with his eyes open to the precipice, can have reconciled it to himself to aid and abet the wild and ruinous career of which the dawn of the noble lord's peace administration has given promise to the country, is to me unaccountable. Does the right hon. gentleman need to be reminded of the dreadful consequences that have followed from financial difficulties? of the terrible convulsions, the bloody revolutions to which they have given birth in no distant countries, and at no remote periods? or does he vainly imagine that with us alone the same moral causes will not produce the same moral effects,—that we forsooth by some magical incantation are to be exempted from the train of disasters attendant upon financial mal-administration? Our resources indeed are great, pre-eminently great, but have they not been severely tried? and where are those resources that can be for ever proof against gross mismanagement? Sir, the greater our zeal or apparent wealth, the louder only will be the explosion,—the wider the ruin. The right hon. gentleman talks of a financial crisis, and how have we found him prepared to avert it, or by what measures has he proposed to meet it? one, and one only—taxation!—unjust, unnecessary, impossible taxation! Sir, the event of the crisis of a false, fallacious system, and under such auspices cannot, I fear, be doubtful. We have blown a bubble, and would fain believe it to be a ball of gold: the creation of a false standard of value has not a little contributed to our present embarrassment and distress—the consequences of so gross a practical error in political economy as the application of force to credit (a contradiction in terms), are now beginning to develope themselves, and where are the propositions on the part of the government for reverting to the point of safety from whence we have departed?—we look for them in vain. It would seem as if their senses could hardly credit that which their sagacity could not foresee. Sir, a return, not violent, not precipitate, but by sure and not slow degrees to a system at once safe, simple, and honest, is, in my conscience I believe, indispensable to our existence. And who can doubt for a moment what must be the first step taken towards such return? My friend the noble mover has told you, the address itself emphatically points it out—to bring your expenditure within your means! Incessantly progressive in the rapid career of public profusion, we have arrived at a point at which sums the most enormous cease to startle us;—the very magnitude of our expenditure has made its amount matter of indifference;—but it is a morbid indifference,—it is the callous carelessness of the consumptive patient! In the year 1780 Mr. Burke raised his powerful voice against an expenditure of 14 millions: in 1792 I find Mr. Pitt congratulating the country on the revenue exceeding the expenditure by near half a million, the one amounting to 16 millions, the other to 15½, including one appropriated to the sinking fund—: to-day we are desired to sit down patiently under an expenditure in establishments only of near 30 millions, and the total of the outgoings, including interest of debt, will come nearer to 70 than 60 millions!—but I have pledged myself to the House to avoid a detail already most ably gone into, and I shall leave the subject with putting one short question to the House;—if we cannot raise our revenue to meet our expenditure, and will not reduce our expenditure to the level of our means, is it not as demonstrable as the plainest proposition in Euclid, that ruin, inevitable ruin, must await us?

Sir, the secretary at war has more than hinted at the only real ground of opposition to this address, in the principle of which he assures us we are all agreed—it is neither more nor less than this, that any such address must necessarily imply some want of confidence in the minister of the day. Such is the awful consideration that is to strike us dumb, and to paralyze our efforts for the public good. Confidence! the noble lord opposite must surely have heard enough within these walls to satisfy him that the days of a blind, indiscriminate confidence were for him past and gone for ever—Confidence! how should it have survived the scenes we have witnessed during the present session? —or how can the noble lord continue to expect from others that which it is impossible he should any longer feel in himself? By what right would he claim it? in virtue of what would he claim it? For his system, or for his no system? for those measures by which he pledges himself to stand or fall, and is defeated, or for those to which neither standing nor falling, but reeling and staggering he is driven perforce? Is it for the assurances of one day, or for the contradictory act of the next? Is it for the prompt alacrity with which he arraigns the people when they presume to petition, or for the tardy afterthought with which he feebly throws the constitutional shield of his own responsibility around his royal master when assailed? Is it for the show of economy that reduces the clerk, or the spirit of prodigality that enriches the clerk's more favoured superior? Is it for the careless magnificence that either forgets or foregoes the debts justly due to his country, or the deliberate design that claims as droits all monies ceded to England, withdraws them from the control and expends them without the consent of parliament? In which of these conflicting virtues, of these inconsistent merits his claim is founded I know not; but, be it in any of them, or be it in all of them, I trust in God that the House of Commons is not yet prepared upon any such invitation to abandon its functions, to disclaim its duties! When will the House prove itself the true guardian of the people's interests if not now? when will it speak out if not now? or how long shall we yet wait in the futile hope of better things? Shall we wait?—Oh shame! we have already waited till Austria has set us an example of military reduction, till France has read us a lesson in civil economy!—And if our internal situation demands this declaration from us, is there any thing in the exterior that forbids it? Sir, if ever there was a moment more marked out than another for the representatives of this great insular empire to approach their sovereign, to communicate with him frankly and firmly, it is the present—it is when a military spirit pervades the universe, and despotic government is the order of the day—when military rivalship has unavoidably grown out of combined military success—when the promises of free constitutions, made by military monarchs to their people in the hour of need, are either postponed or forgotten when the peril is past—when in one quarter a dynasty is maintained on its throne (I argue not now how wisely or how necessarily) by the force and presence of foreign arms—when, in another, loyalty the most devoted, because tempered with rational liberty—(the monstrous crime!) is doomed by him (shall I say the man?) whom it had restored to his throne, to the torture, to exile, imprisonment, and death! When such is the scene that the world presents to us, have we, I ask, nothing to look to at home with more than ordinary interest and anxiety?—nothing to watch over, nothing to fortify, nothing to confirm? Sir, it is in the nature and character of war to pervert the habits of a free people, to corrupt the purity of a free government. Bloodshed and rapine are not the worst evils attendant in its train;—the shock of arms, the desolation of the field are harmless as compared with its subtle and silent operation in undermining liberty and demoralizing man! It has been our lot for nearly a quarter of a century to endure this great calamity—a period indeed of transcendant, of imperishable glory!—but of that period not a day, not an hour has passed over our heads (I allege it not as matter of accusation, but of fact), that has not added something to a series of encroachments on the public rights and liberties. I will not carry the House through a long and disgusting detail to illustrate the revolting proposition; it will be enough to refer the House to the dark and dismal pages of our modern code of taxation! Sir, the brightest achievements of arms, the most splendid military renown are valuable to a nation only in proportion as they secure to it the enjoyment of its civil and social blessings. In war what is not justified, what is not overlooked, what is not permitted? but it is the province of peace to heal, to correct, to renovate. Then it is that this great country (great only because she is free) looks with a fond hope to see a patriot or enlightened minister applying the undivided energies of a comprehensive mind to consolidate the integrity of her own system—to restore her to the grandeur of her own simplicity! and would to God we had the genius of a Burleigh or a Godolphin to preside over the mighty work!

I know not, if in what I have said, I shall be accused of party feelings. I am not philosopher enough to be without preferences or predilections among the public men of my own time any more than of past time, and such as I honestly entertain I shall never be ashamed to avow;—but I am not so blind as to believe that the mass of the public can feel any very deep interest in the contest as between A and B,—a change of names alone will not satisfy, it ought not to satisfy the nation,—more, infinitely more, is necessary—and it is my firm conviction that no administration, of whatever party or parties composed, need at the present day pretend to the public confidence, who do not found their ministry on this basis—the *bonâ fide* sacrifice of patronage to the public necessities!

Lord *Nugent* said:—Mr. Speaker; After the eloquent, the animated, and the luminous, speech which we have heard from my hon. friend, who has just sat down—after the impression which that speech cannot but have wrought upon the House, I feel, I assure you, most fully, the disadvantage under which I venture to offer myself to your notice. With the sentiments, however, which I have always entertained of the military establishments, now again brought under your notice, strongly as I feel those sentiments to be in unison with the motion of the noble lord, into whose hands I rejoice at the proposition of this night having fallen,—I must wish not to acquiesce quite in silence in this vote. So much, nevertheless has been said, and that so ably, on the general question of these establishments, that I am aware that I have neither the motive, nor indeed the excuse, for obtruding myself at any length on your attention.—I shall strictly confine myself to the view which I have always taken of these establishments, as applicable to our probable situation during the current year, and state very shortly the impressions which, after all that has passed in debate on this subject, operate still so strongly upon me. In the first place, Sir, I concur entirely in what has been so often, and I think I may say somewhat unnecessarily, repeated on the other side, namely, that this is a question which, whether financially or constitutionally viewed, never can, or ought to be considered as an abstract proposition. Every question, whether of the necessity, or of the danger, of a proposed standing army, in time of peace, must, of course, be considered with reference to the extent of the force so proposed. For some army, even in peace, it is I believe allowed on all hands, is necessary.

But gentlemen opposite have very repeatedly warned us against the setting up any analogy, whatever, between the establishments of 1783 and 1792, and the military establishment now proposed. Because, it is said, by the course of time and of events, we are no longer in the same relative station with regard to the rest of the world, and therefore no analogy should be set up as to the rate of peace establishment. Sir, I agree entirely with those hon. gentlemen, although, perhaps, I agree with them on different premises, and certainly for a very different conclusion. But I agree with them that no such analogy should be attempted. I think there is every reason that time or events could have furnished us with for the peace establishment, at least as far as concerns England, being now considerably smaller than at any former period:—and for this plain reason, that, as our success has been unprecedented, unprecedented also ought to be the measure of security which that success has purchased. Otherwise, all our exertions have been unavailing—all our triumphs barren—nay worse than barren. Every drop of blood shed in the contest has been wantonly and wickedly wasted,—poured forth, not to advance the glory of our country, but to afford a pretext and a precedent for future establishments, highly burthensome to her finances, and highly dangerous to her public liberty.

But then we are told of our colonies, and Ireland. And with regard to this last most difficult and momentous point, I feel that I must not now obtrude any remarks I might have to offer upon the time of the House. After the portentous, but I fear too faithful, picture drawn of that gallant but ill-fated country by the right hon. secretary for Ireland, this subject has risen to a gloomy and awful importance which must, and ought to, render it a question of separate and independent discussion. I shall not therefore take up one moment of your time, Sir, on this point, excepting to observe that, in commenting on the weakness of the civil power in that country, and the necessity of an active military supervision, the right hon. secretary has drawn the picture of a country whose moral principle has been exhausted, whose social connexions have been dissolved, whose passions and prejudices have been all arrayed against the interests of good order and morality, by years (by centuries I may say) of misgovernment. He has described the symptoms, but not the disease. And surely, surely, in discussing the interests of that brave and kind-spirited nation, we should beware of encountering by martial law a disease, itself the result of a long system of governing by the fears, and not the affections of the people. *Quid leges sine moribus?* is not to be asked of Ireland. Ireland would reply, and I fear too truly, *quid mores sine legibus?* But of this I will say no more. A very early day has been fixed for this discussion by a right hon. friend of mine near me.

But then, our colonies. We are reminded of our late vast accession of colonial greatness, and we are asked whether this part of our establishment is to be still on the scale of 1783 or 1792. The alternative is put to us as between the abandonment of what we have won, or the increase of our establishment in order to enable us to protect it. Sir, to this I think two answers may be given. In the first place I do not believe we are in this dilemma. I certainly very much mistook the policy of government if they did not recommend our late acquisitions to us on the very grounds of their being able, particularly the Ionian islands, to defend themselves. Hemmed in as they are in the corner of a sea where no navy is seen to float but England's, if those islands must be defended by England, surely their defence should be naval only. The West India islands are to be defended—against what? Against the navy of Hayti? No.—Against America? No.—We are at peace with her. Against what then? Martinique and Guadaloupe? Perhaps considering the unsettled state of France, considering this intermediate state described by a noble lord opposite, this purgatory between peace and war, it may be against Martinique and Guadaloupe. But who then ceded those islands to France? Why were they ceded? Was it to tempt France to break her reluctant vow against the revival of that most detestable of all human traffics, the traffic in slaves? Or was it only to give ourselves the pretext for an increase of military force in our West India Islands? Canada? But there it is said our population has vastly increased. And here, Sir, do permit me to protest against the argument of increased population calling for an increased military, wheresoever that argument may be applied. If your object be to array the military against the civil population, if you consider the latter as enemies against which the former is to act, as slaves the former is to coerce, or as victims the former is to immolate, then, and then only, can I understand the necessity of apportioning your military to the increasing growth of your civil population. But, if it means not this, the argument I think can mean nothing.—Then Gibraltar, and Malta. At the very time that we describe Malta as our great resting place, our tower of strength, in the Mediterranean, we give Gibraltar in time of peace a larger garrison than formed her complement in time of war. About 3000 was I believe the full average, in war, of the complement for Gibraltar, excepting, of course, during the memorable siege of that place, when the garrison was reinforced. And yet, in peace, in peace with Spain, when the Spanish lines, which it took all the energies of Spain, backed by the assistance of France, and the genius of Crillon, to erect under the guns of Gibraltar, when those lines have been destroyed, and when months, even after a declaration of war, must be spent, before a gun can be brought to bear against that fortress, mistress as she is of the sea on one hand, and the neutral ground on the other,—at this time, a larger garrison is in contemplation there, than was ever kept up even when those means of attack remained in their fullest integrity. But, Sir, if it could be shown, which I think it cannot, that our new gotten colonies, that the Cape, or Mauritius, or even Ceylon, requires, besides black troops, an augmentation of force to defend them,—supposing it can be shown, that they are totally dependent on extraneous means for defence,—that their expense exceeds their revenue,—that they are therefore elements of weakness and not of strength, and not of weakness only, but of danger to our liberties, by the means of patronage and the means of military excess they offer,—then indeed I think it might with justice be said "Perish our colonies, and live the constitution!"

But, Sir, let us return home and look at our army here. Let us look at the arguments by which ministers urge the necessity of these establishments. In the war out of which we have just so happily and so triumphantly found our way, an alliance of all the crowned heads of Europe associates itself in a bond as unprecedented as unexpected, to reduce the power of France within its just and proper limits. Success has outrun the expectations and the hopes of men, and the state in question is reduced to a position, in which she can but receive the terms to which that confederacy may be disposed to admit her. Such was the state to which the kind destinies of Europe had reduced France. Such was the glorious game which the extraordinary good fortune of the noble lord opposite had placed within his hands. Solid and permanent and glorious repose was set full within our view.

Now let us turn from a scene which the just expectations of the country had, too sanguinely, pourtrayed, and, in the exhausted and lamentable state of the country, let us direct our eyes to the picture, "like the mildewed ear, blasting its wholesome brother," of what the noble lord has done. A peace, gained by such sacrifices, and discussed under such advantages,—advantages "quæ nemo promittire divum auderet,"—a peace is concluded, whose weakness only is held out to us to justify the continued prospect of an armed truce abroad, and of ruined finances and a military government at home. From a struggle which appalled, I believe, the boldest of us, we have, by the talents and firmness of our general, by the intrepid and patient courage of our troops, been blessed with glorious victory. By the act of our ministers, we have, from a scene of triumph and exultation, from hopes of security justified by success, been left to contemplate the real result of all these things in continued burthens on the people, in hollow and dangerous truce, our country hated and insulted abroad, her liberties violently and daringly menaced at home. Let us look around, and see the state of our own country. Let us go forth among our fields and our manufactories, and let us see what are the tokens and indications of peace. Can we trace them among a peasantry without work, and consequently without bread? Among farmers unable to pay their rents, and, a fortiori, unable to contribute to that parochial relief on which the peasantry is rendered dependent? Among land-holders unable to collect their rents, and yet obliged to maintain their rank and station as gentlemen in society. Let us listen to the cry of the country. It is poverty from the proudest villa to the meanest cottage. Poverty rings in our ears, it lays in our path which ever way we turn. It is not the congratulations of the noble lord opposite, it is not his song of victory, that can drown this lamentable cry. It is not in the power of the noble lord, it is not in the power of this House, or of parliament, to stifle the cry of want, nor to brave the stroke of universal bankruptcy. There is but one means left to satisfy the country, to avert these evils, or to redeem the pledged faith of parliament. Retrenchment, rigorous, and severe retrenchment, in every branch, and in every article, of the public expenditure. What is the retrenchment we wish for? Look again to that enormous establishment which was once declared by ministers to be essential to the safety of the empire, and which has been once already, since that declaration, withdrawn in the estimates, and reduced. Where are we to learn the necessity of such retrenchment? Let us look to every private establishment, from high to low, which our taxes have ruined, and there let us learn the lesson of economical reform.

Sir, these are awful signs of the time we live in, and the more so because we see that at a period, like this, of general domestic retrenchment, there is one private establishment only that has not yet obeyed the call,—there is but one House that, as the pressure has increased, has welcomed yet further profusion,—and that is, unhappily, to be said of the first House in the land. It is not, Sir, on account of the already unprecedented state to which your public finances are reduced,—it is not on account of the yet increasing distress and difficulty which must chill the enterprise and check the commercial prosperity of your empire,—which affects, in nearly an equal degree, every rank, station, and description of men,—it is not on this account alone that I should entreat the House to consider once more what is the ruinous extent of the establishment it has, this year, sanctioned. Financial distress, however great, may, by discreet and cautious economy, be yet repaired. It is not on account of the weak and exhausted state to which this country must be reduced by these establishments in time of peace, and in which exhausted state the country will be found, should necessity again compel us to have recourse to arms,—it is not on this consideration alone that I appeal to the House. The means of national resource, however enfeebled, may, by public energy and public zeal, at such a crisis, be yet revived. It is on account of the departure from those old constitutional principles on which the greatest minds have acted, and the greatest authorities of our history have spoken,—it is on account of the departure from those great maxims, the bulwarks at once of public liberty and public happiness, which, if once overthrown, can never be restored,—it is on account of the abandonment of those constitutional securities, which have hitherto formed the bond of mutual union and confidence between the Crown and people (securities which, till now, parliament has never undervalued or disregarded), which are still within our reach, but on which the vote of to-night is now, for the last time, to pronounce,—that I hope and trust the House will second the voice of the country in acceding to the motion of the noble lord.

Mr. *Curwen* thought, that, however pertinaciously the noble lord might adhere to his system, the measure now stood in a very different view from that which it presented at the commencement of the session; and he was certain the noble lord would never have proposed it, had he not depended on the support of the income tax. As the matter stood at present, he would ask whether the noble lord meant to add insult to the sufferings of the country? So entirely was the situation of the country changed, that the noble lord must make out an uncommonly strong case to prove that all those principles of naval defence, which had been so sacredly cherished by our ancestors, must now be foregone, and supplanted by that system of military pageantry of which the noble lord seemed so enamoured. Had he endeavoured to reduce this military mania, he would have immortalized himself; but, instead of this, he had increased all the burthens consequent on such a system. The noble lord said that a large force must be kept up here to supply our West India islands. He (Mr. Curwen) doubted the policy of maintaining colonies in that quarter, particularly Canada; he thought the wisest measure would be to declare that country independent, and thereby to save the expense of the military force which was stationed there. The situation of the country was such, that minor retrenchments were inadequate to meet the exigencies of the times. The resources were obviously inadequate to meet the expenditure, yet with a degree of inconsistency, somewhat unaccountable, we were told by the noble lord, "O! wait till next year, and you'll be relieved." If the noble lord was allowed to go on in this way the state of peace would soon be more ruinous than a state of war [Hear!]. A fair chance was now given to the noble lord of uniting himself with the country, and again recovering that popularity which he had lost. He was ashamed to see that want of decency in the noble lord which led him to be so indifferent to public feeling, and so ready to insult the country. It was at all times derogatory to the character of a minister to thwart the public voice, but it was particularly so in the noble lord, considering the manner in which he so thwarted it.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that as far as related to the finances, he would be sorry not to have an opportunity of explaining shortly one or two of the points which had been touched upon in the course of this debate. With respect to the motion itself, he could not think that it would be wise to adopt it, as it would make the House decide prematurely on the establishment for the ensuing year. Neither the noble lord who moved the address, nor any other person, could so calculate upon those circumstances which might occur during the year to alter the situation of the country with relation to the amount of the establishments which might be necessary. The present was not the permanent peace establishment, but was such a one as the circumstances of the country required; and it was as such that the House had already decided upon it. But the noble lord was not contented with this; he now called upon the House to decide upon measures of future economy. To call upon the House to give any decision upon measures of prospective regulation, with respect to the amount of establishments to be maintained, was equally premature and unwise. Another hon. gentleman, however, had given a new turn to the debate, by calling upon the House to support the address, not with a view of rescinding the vote on the establishments, nor with a view to any prospective regulations, but as an expression of a want of confidence in his majesty's ministers. He could only say that he wished this was as plainly expressed in the address as it was implied. But without saying more on this subject, he would pass to what had been said by another hon. gentleman, who thought the financial situation of the country was so much changed as to make new regulations necessary with respect to the amount of the establishment. If this was really the case, he could only say that, for his own part, he would be the first to come forward and propose such new arrangements. But he conceived that the sums for the public service had been voted on more stable grounds; and that the situation of the country was not so much changed as to make it necessary to abandon the establishment which had been agreed to by parliament. It was undoubtedly true that some new regulations merely as to finance had become necessary; but whatever variation might be required in this respect in consequence of the resolutions of the House, it would not be expected that he should now open the budget by anticipation, by going into the minute details of these variations. He would therefore at present merely make a few statements in round numbers, to help the House to judge of the force of some of the arguments that had been used this night by an hon. gentleman on the other side of the House (Mr. Grant). That hon. gentleman had argued, that there would this year be an excess in the supplies, over the ways and means, to the amount of 19,300,000*l.*, which sum it would be necessary to borrow. Now, the following were the facts: there was a loan from the bank to the amount of 4,500,000*l.*; and it had also become necessary to borrow a sum sufficient to repay the amount of the taxes rejected by the House, which was about 8,500,000*l.* These two sums, making together 13,000,000*l.*, was the whole amount which would be necessary, instead of 19,300,000*l.* as stated erroneously by the hon. gentleman. Then, as to the comparison made between the present establishment, and those at the commencement of a former peace, the peace establishment this year after the war, required a loan of 13,000,000*l.* Having mentioned the word "loan," he might now state to the House, that a loan formed no part of the resources of the present year [Hear, hear!]. For the service of this year 13,000,000*l.* remained to be raised in some way; and of this sum 4,500,000*l.* had already been advanced by the bank. During the present year the people had already been released from taxes to the amount of sixteen or seventeen millions; a prodigious sum, exceeding even the amount of the whole public revenue at the commencement of the war, a sum so far exceeding any relief of this kind that had been given at the close of a war, that never, on any former occasion, had any relief at all been given in this way. The case was very different at the close of the American war, when, instead of taking off taxes, Mr. Pitt had been obliged to lay on new taxes to the amount of two millions. But this year, instead of laying on new taxes, as had been necessary after the peace of 1783, taxes were taken off to the amount of 17,000,000*l.*, leaving a difference in favour of the present state of the country, compared with that at the close of the American war, of 19,000,000*l.* Now, as to the expenditure, compared with what it was then. In this, the first year of peace, we had voted an establishment of 26,000,000*l.*, including the interest of exchequer bills. In the year 1783 the amount voted was 14,000,000*l.*, exclusive (as he believed, but he could not now speak positively) of the interest of exchequer bills. In 1784, the expense of the establishment was reduced from 14,000,000*l.* to 8,000,000*l.* Thus, then, in 1783, the country while at peace had an establishment which cost 14,000,000*l.* at a time when the whole resources to meet this sum, besides the duties of customs and excise, were the land and malt taxes, when there was no surplus of the consolidated fund, nor those facilities which were now in our power. So that in 1783, calculating at the highest, the clear amount of the income was only one-fifth part of the amount of the sum voted for the establishment. What was the situation of the country now? In the present year the surplus of the consolidated fund amounted to about 3,000,000*l.* (it was 2,600,000*l.* at Christmas, and might now therefore be safely stated at 3,000,000*l.*), and there were excise taxes to the amount of 4,000,000*l.*; so that this year, having voted an establishment of 24,000,000*l.*, the whole amount of the resources to meet it was 10,000,000*l.*; therefore, the clear income of this year bore to the expenditure a proportion of one-fourth more than it did at the close of the American war in 1783. In comparing the state of the country at these two periods, it was to be recollected, that at the former there was no sinking fund; and of this fund, he said, it was now a treasure, and not a charge to government—but a treasure which it was better to reserve than to touch upon. He did not wish in these details to anticipate what he should soon have to open to the House in his official capacity, but the most satisfactory reflexions resulted from what he had stated. The hon. gentleman opposite had praised Mr. Pitt for the clamour he had encountered; he therefore hoped that on this score his majesty's ministers would be allowed the merit of having encountered clamour even to the extent of overwhelming superiority. Yet they had not shrunk from their duty; but, on the contrary, in the support of that which they thought a most wise, politic, and necessary plan of finance, they had hazarded whatever they enjoyed of popularity. This he hoped would be taken not only as a proof of their sincerity but of their firmness, in maintaining what they thought right with a view to the public interest. As to the motion before the House, he thought his noble friend, the secretary at war, had adopted the proper course in not giving a direct negative to a motion, the object of which was public economy. It was therefore better to pass to the other orders of the day.

Colonel *Palmer* said, it was with extreme reluctance that he found himself compelled to oppose the measures of the noble lord, with respect to the large military establishments which it was intended to maintain. He was aware that he had no right to trouble the House with his own private feelings, but he was anxious, as it was his first political opposition, to assure the noble lord that he felt the most unfeigned respect for him, and that he firmly believed he was actuated by as much honesty and integrity as any of his hon. friends by whom he was surrounded. With respect to the military establishments, considering them in a constitutional point of view, he certainly thought them highly dangerous, besides being, as they undoubtedly were, greater than the service of the country required. They only enabled ministers to persevere in their extravagance, against the distresses and against the voice of the people. He could not comprehend why the sentiments of the nation were to be disregarded upon that subject alone. The people, by their firmness, had succeeded in getting rid of the property tax. The same people had since petitioned against the large establishments; but the same representatives who had voted against the property tax, had not voted against the large establishments. They had, on the contrary, supported them. He did not wish to insinuate the slightest imputation upon those hon. members, but surely it was to be lamented that the exertions of the people out of doors had not been more strenuously supported in that House. His majesty's ministers seemed to be unaccountably ignorant of the real situation of the country. Whether it was that, like their royal master, they breathed altogether in a different atmosphere, or that they were surrounded by interested flatterers, who studiously sought to delude them, so it was, that they exhibited an utter unacquaintance with the feelings which animated every class of the people. Among the other grounds which he had heard alleged for maintaining so large a military force, was that there existed a great spirit of Jacobinism throughout the country. If such a spirit did indeed prevail, that House ought to inquire whether it arose from the pressure of real, or the influence of imaginary grievances. He apprehended, however, that what was called Jacobinism would be found to be only discontent at evils which might and ought to be removed. Another reason which had been urged for keeping up a standing army, was the insecurity of the peace, but on that point all sides of the House seemed now to be agreed, and he apprehended the noble lord himself would not affirm that there was any real ground for suspecting its duration, whatever plausible arguments might be used for maintaining our own military establishments upon a large scale until the other powers of Europe had reduced theirs, and until the civil authorities in every country assumed their just and proper ascendancy over the military ones. The hon. member concluded by animadverting upon the institution of the military college, which he considered as calculated, in time of peace especially, to generate habits and feelings incompatible with those sentiments upon which the true greatness and prosperity of the country must always rest.

Mr. *J. Smith* observed that the speech of the chancellor of the exchequer was one suited merely for his own purposes. He had compared the present year with that of 1783, and talked about relieving the country from 17,000,000*l.* of taxation. Why had he so relieved the country? Because he knew that those taxes could not be paid by the people [Hear, hear]! He knew also, that even if the income tax had not been rejected, it would have been impossible to collect it even at 5 per cent. Those who had justified that impost on the grounds stated by Mr. Pitt, ought to show that the situation of the country was the same now as at that period: it would be no easy undertaking to prove, that during the administration of Mr. Pitt, farms had been relinquished, rents unpaid, and gazettes crowded with daily bankruptcies to any thing like the extent at present experienced. The conduct of ministers demonstrated that they were utterly unacquainted with the real state of the country; they wilfully shut their eyes upon its distresses, for he could not suppose them so positively blind as to be really insensible to what was obvious to all but themselves. He defied them to impose upon the country any system of mock economy; the good sense of the nation would not be so deluded; and the House, as representing the nation, was bound to reject all mere pretences of retrenchment. He deprecated the expedient of a small loan, which he had heard mentioned, because it was calculated to depress the funds.

The cries of question became general, and the House divided on the amendment for proceeding to the other orders of the day:

For the Amendment	158
Against it	102
Majority	56

List of the Minority.

Althorp, viscount
Anson, sir George
Atherly, Arthur
Barham, Jos. F.
Baring, Alex.
Birch, Joseph
Brand, hon. T.
Brougham, H.
Browne, Dom.
Byng, George
Burrell, hon. P. D.
Burrell, sir C.
Burrell, W.
Barclay, O.
Bolland, John
Beach, W. H.
Bankes, H.
Calcraft, John
Calvert, Charles
Campbell, hon. J.
Cavendish, lord G.
Caulfield, hon. H.
Chaloner, Robert
Carew, R. S.
Cocks, hon. J. S.
Curwen, J. C.
Creevey, Thos.
Duncannon, visc.
Dundas, hon. L.
Douglas, hon. F. S.
Elliot, rt. hon. W.
Frank, Frank
Finlay, Kirkman
Fitzgerald, lord W.
Fitzroy, lord John
Foley, hon. A.
Foley, T.
Grattan, rt. hon. H.
Grenfell, Pascoe
Grant, J. P.
Gaskell, B.
Hammersley, H.
Halsey, Jos.
Hamilton, lord A.
Harcourt, John
Heathcote, sir G.
Hornby, E.
Horner, Francis
Howorth, H.
Hughes, W. L.
Hurst, Robert
Knox, Thomas
Lamb, hon. W.
Lambton, John G.
Langton, W. G.
Lewis, T. F.
Law, hon. E.
Lubbock, John
Mackintosh, sir J.
Martin, H.
Martin, John
Milton, viscount
Marryat, Jos.
Methuen, Paul
Morland, S. B.
Moore, Peter
Neville, hon. H.
Newport, sir John
North, Dudley.
O'Hara, C.
Ossulston, lord
Palmer, Charles
Peirse, Henry
Philips, George
Piggott, sir A.
Ponsonby, rt. hon. G.
Plunkett, rt. hn. W. C.
Preston, Richard
Prittie, hon. F. A.
Pym, Francis
Rashleigh, Wm.
Ramsden, J. C.
Ridley, sir M. W.
Romilly, sir S.
Sefton, earl of
Sharpe, R.
Smith, Samuel
Smith, Abel
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TELLERS.

Macdonald, James
Nugent, lord

ALIEN BILL.] Lord *Castlereagh*, in pursuance of notice, rose to move for the repeal of the present Alien Bill, for the purpose of introducing a measure more calculated to the circumstances of the country, similar to that adopted by parliament after the peace of Paris. He observed, that although tranquillity in Europe had been restored, the situation of the British empire was still such as to require precautions against the possibility of the disturbance of internal security. The peace Alien Bill of 1814 had been found adequate to the purpose for which it was designed, and had rendered the war Alien Bill previously in force unnecessary: it had for some years been found convenient to watch the entrance of foreigners into this kingdom by a measure which, while it gave certain power to the executive government, was calculated also for the protection of those to whom it related; but no law ought to exceed the exigency of the case, which was now considerably lessened. The Crown, in truth, possessed the right of sending aliens out of the realm on suspicion that they were concerned in practices dangerous to the state; but it had been thought wise, since the time of Mr. Pitt, to arm the executive with the countenance of the legislature; and for this purpose he now moved for leave to bring in a bill to repeal the act of the last session respecting aliens, and to substitute other provisions, for a time to be limited, in lieu of it.

Mr. *Horner* was not aware that any such motion had been fixed for this night; but he was anxious, in the very first instance, to give it his decided negative. He had opposed the alien bill of 1814, because he thought it not only uncalled for, but unconstitutional; and if at that time it was not required, there was now even still less excuse for such a measure. The noble lord had talked in his usual style—a style that had now become fashionable—of a peace alien bill, and a war alien bill. The House had heard lately of peace regulation bills, and war regulation bills; of peace bank restriction bills, and war bank restriction bills; and now it was once more to be told, that extraordinary powers were required to enable ministers to send foreigners out of the country. To the constitution such a measure was unknown, for it allowed ingress and egress of foreigners without restriction; and the reason stated by Mr. Pitt for the alien act of 1792 was, that it was merely to secure internal tranquillity, and not to be applied to such purposes as those to which it had of late years been perverted—the confinement and transportation of individuals who had, for some cause or other not assigned, become obnoxious to ministers. In 1793 certain principles were afloat which might be supposed dangerous to the repose of the nation; but where would the noble lord now discover any such peril? If the noble lord could furnish any from his fertile imagination, he would not find a man in the country to agree with him. He trusted, now the possibility of injury from the interference of the inhabitants of other states was removed, that the ancient and wholesome system of policy would be pursued; and that Great Britain would treat strangers with her wonted liberality and confidence, without dreading that a few foreigners, even if they were ill disposed, would be able to disturb her tranquillity and happiness. He must therefore solemnly protest against the introduction of this peace alien bill.

Mr. *Bathurst* justified his noble friend in calling it the peace alien bill, on the ground that it had been so denominated after the treaties of Amiens and of Paris. It was true that the revolutionary principles that broke out in 1793 had now been nearly extinguished; but still a remnant of Jacobin spirit lurked behind, and much inflammable matter was to be found that might, without difficulty, be fired by the aid of suspicious foreigners. At least, therefore, a possibility of danger existed against which prudence required that provision should be made. Magna Charta, and the constitutional principles there formed for the protection of alien merchants, had often been referred to; but the power of the king to send beyond seas such strangers as should be obnoxious from their designing practices, was at least as old, if not as completely recognised. The question now was, whether the dangers of 1814 did not at present exist; and if they did, the alien bill ought to be passed, to show foreigners that they could not with impunity foment discontents among the people of this country against the established government.

Mr. *Baring* thought that the right hon. gentleman had not put the question on the proper footing, for all his arguments tended to prove that the country should always have had an alien act. As to the danger to be apprehended from the remnant of Jacobinism and from foreigners, no one but the right hon. gentleman could perceive it. If there was a period at which a spirit of satisfaction, quiet, and loyalty prevailed throughout the nation, it was the present. The right hon. gentleman had said, that the Crown had at all times possessed the powers to be conferred by the bill. Then why propose such a measure? It would enable other governments to interfere, in order to turn out, not those who were dangerous to us, but obnoxious to those governments. If Ferdinand of Spain, or the kings of France and of Prussia had any hostility towards an individual, they would only have to make a communication to the secretary of state, and he would have no choice left but to comply with their request. He had himself witnessed cases in which persons of the greatest respectability, who had come over on pursuits entirely commercial, had been sent away most unjustly, on the mere representation of a foreign minister. It would be far more convenient for the secretary of state to be able to say, as lord Whitworth had done to Buonaparté in the case of Peltier, that he was subject to no other laws than the laws of this country, although that was not true at the time, for the power of removal had already been conferred on government by the alien act. He should certainly vote against the introduction of any such bill, as that now proposed.

Mr. *Addington* stated, that there were now 20,000 aliens in this kingdom, and added, that it would be highly imprudent, till the spirit of animosity against this country and her institutions had been eradicated, not to keep an account of those individuals, of their professions, and of their places of abode. He also denied that any merchants had been sent away on the mere representation of a foreign minister without any cogent reasons against them.

Mr. *Lamb*, although he did not believe that any injustice had been committed under the former and existing alien acts, yet was persuaded that they had occasioned great irregularities, and that they had been diverted from their ostensible object for the purpose of aiding the police, and saving the trouble of proceeding against foreigners according to the ordinary forms of law.

Leave was given to bring in the bill.

LASCARS.] Mr. *Horner* observing an hon. gentleman belonging to the board of control present, wished to know, whether, in consequence of the report of the committee appointed last session to inquire into the condition of the Lascar sailors who came to this country in private ships, any step had been taken to provide for the relief of their extreme distress?

Mr. *Wallace* stated, that a correspondence had taken place on the subject with the East India and the East India dock companies, but without success. Applications had then been made to other bodies, and it would probably be necessary to come to parliament to create a commission, and invest it with such powers as may be deemed proper. He should not object to the production of any part of the correspondence which had been carried on with the two companies, if the hon. gentleman should wish to examine it.

Mr. *Horner* thought it was proper that the House should see what had taken place. It appeared that the East India company had refused to undertake any thing for the permanent relief of the Lascars during their stay in this country. He therefore should move, "That there be laid before this House, a copy of all correspondence between the commissioners for the affairs of India, and any other public body, relative to the care and maintenance of Lascar sailors during their stay in England."

Mr. *Grant* begged the House would suspend their opinion until the papers should be before them; and stated generally, that the indisposition manifested by the respective bodies to which they belonged to take upon themselves any responsibility on the subject, was occasioned solely by their conviction, that nothing short of parliamentary interference could be effective with respect to it.

Mr. *Astell* defended the conduct of the East-India dock company on similar grounds. He maintained, that nothing but the power of government could manage that people.

The motion was agreed to.

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